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**BLENDER**

# BLENDER

★ THE ULTIMATE MUSIC MAGAZINE

**SHANIA TWAIN  
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PICTURES EVER!**

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COWBOY BOOTS!**  
**JOHNNY CASH'S  
STEPDAUGHTER HITS  
ROCK BOTTOM**

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SPECIAL**

THE

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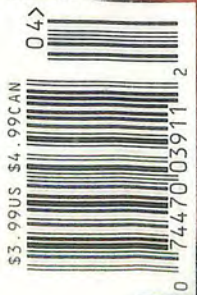
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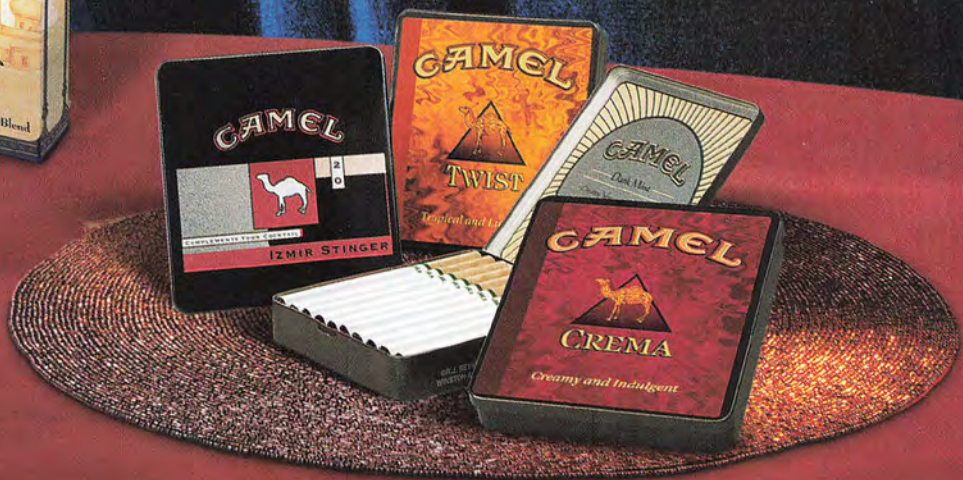
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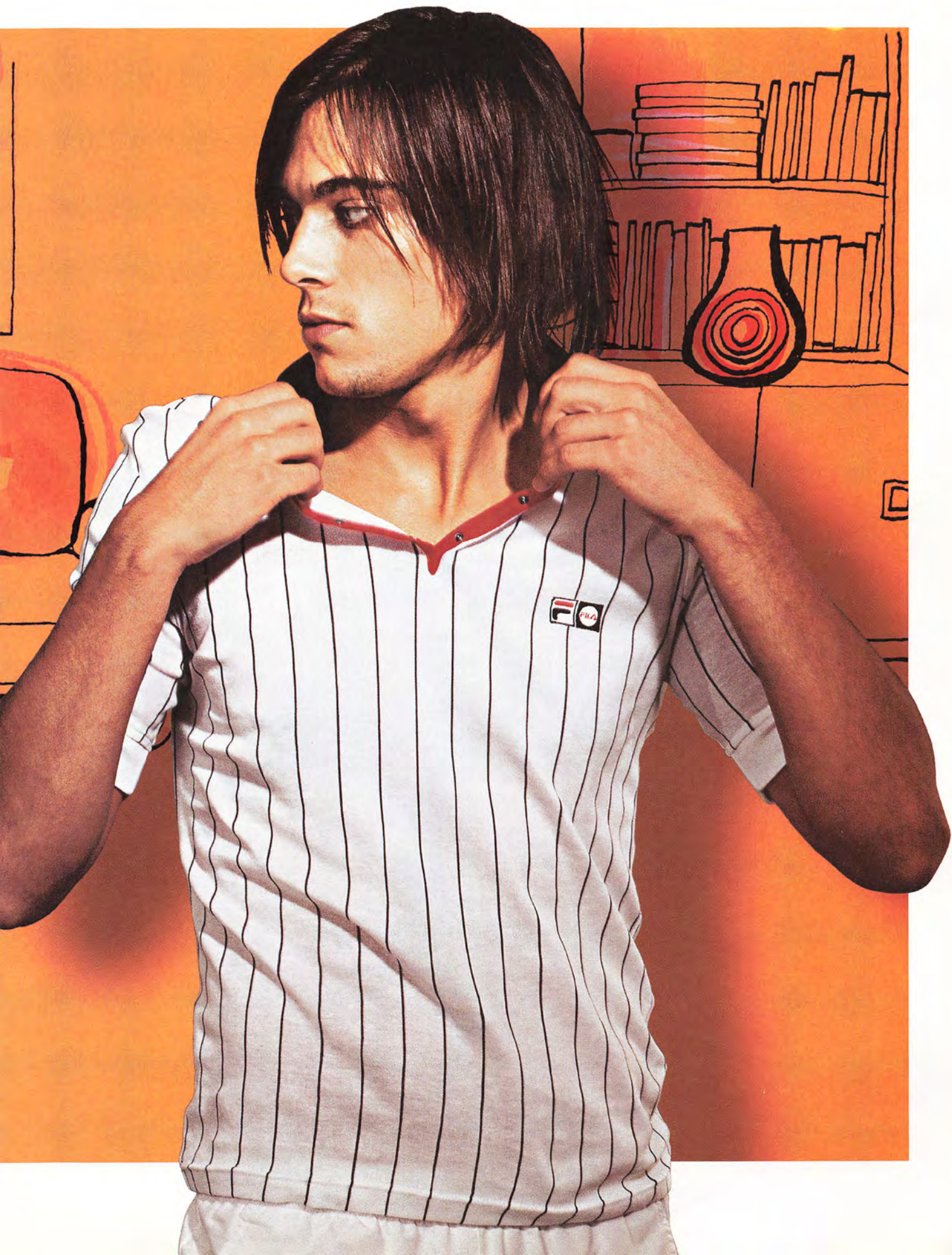
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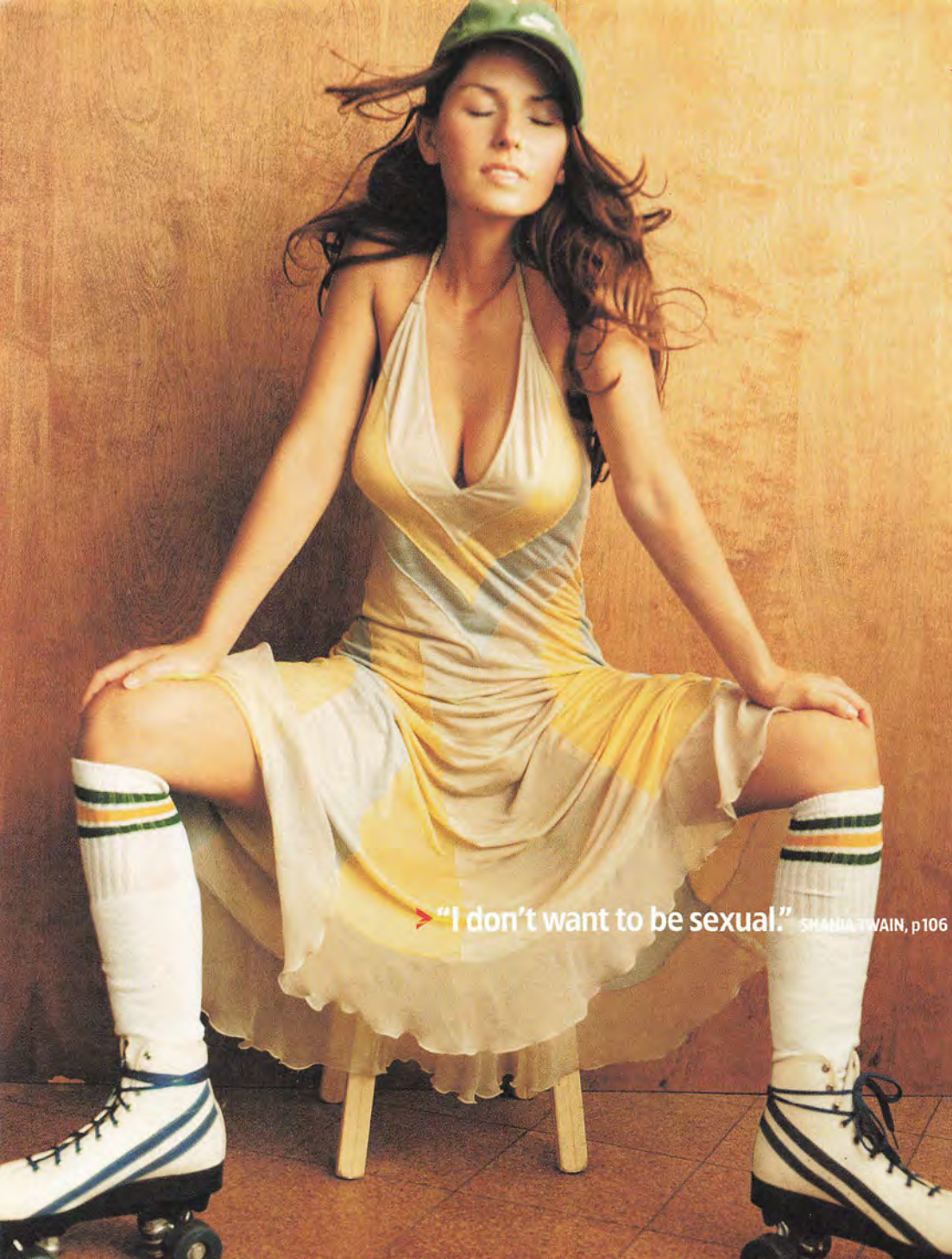
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➤ "I don't want to be sexual." SHANIA TWAIN, p106

# ★ BLENDER

## FEATURES >>

- 96 GOOD CHARLOTTE**  
Joel and Benji Madden, mohawked 24-year-old twins, claim that the worst insult you could hurl their way is "rock star." Then what's with all the groupie shagging? Hmmm?
- 100 CARLENE CARTER**  
Johnny Cash's stepdaughter vowed to put the "cunt" back in country. But living on the lost highway has spiraled her through drink, drugs and the death of her boyfriend. What went wrong?
- 104 INTERPOL MUST SPEND BLENDER'S \$848!**  
*Blender* gives New York art-rockers Interpol a load of money. How can things go awry? "Drinking on an empty stomach is never a good idea." *Bleaargh!!!*
- 106 SHANIA TWAIN**  
Her own brother called her a robot, but Shania Twain is too busy for sibling rivalry. Her new album may be called *Up!*, but she wants to make it clear: "I've never actually seen cocaine. . . ."



### ON THE COVER >>>>

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## 59 500 CDs YOU MUST OWN BEFORE YOU DIE!

Beck, the Beatles, Bob Marley, Bob Dylan, the Bee Gees, the Beach Boys, the Backstreet Boys. (And that's just a few of the B's.) You need only 500 albums in the world, and *Blender* proudly lists them for you. *Awww, yeah!*



Clockwise from top: Peggy Sirotz; Perou; Alphonse Reymonde (still-life); Michael Putland/Retna UK



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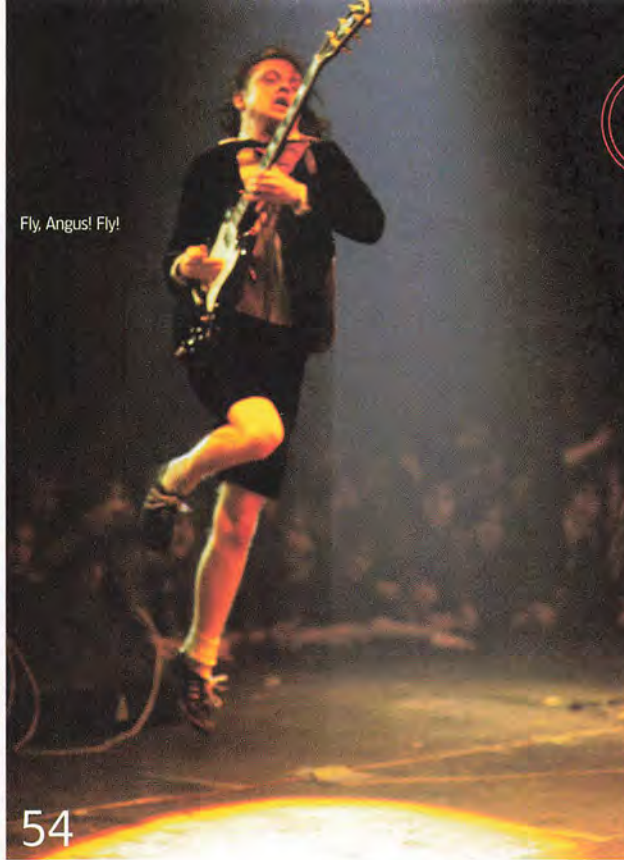


152



134

Fly, Angus! Fly!



54



118

> "I think there's a side of me that's black."  
BOOMKAT'S TARYN MANNING, p28

## REGULARS >>

- 16 EDITOR'S LETTER**
- 18 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**
- 24 BURNER**  
Mariah Carey goes on TV and gets a little too private. Shakira goes onstage and shakes her little candelabra. Everyone goes gaga for *Blender's* favorite teenage Russian lesbians. And more!
- 28 THE NEXT BIG THING!**  
Boomkat; Freeway
- 50 ASK BLENDER**  
Sex sounds on the record, Mariah Carey's mole, Jimi Hendrix's supergroup and more!
- 52 THE GREATEST SONGS EVER!**  
A folkie's '70s swoon becomes a smash for Roberta Flack, the Fugees — and Hugh Grant.
- 54 DEAR SUPERSTAR**  
Angus Young: Do women really love a man in uniform — say, a schoolboy's uniform?
- 152 WHO DOES FABOLOUS THINK HE IS?**  
He's a pretty-boy thug rapper from New York with a soft spot for Shania Twain and a flamboyant blueprint for his coffin.

## THE GUIDE >>

- 118 NEW RELEASES**  
50 Cent, Ben Harper, Lucinda Williams, Everclear, the Libertines and more
- 132 CHART**
- 134 REISSUES**  
The Clash, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Al Green, the Who and more
- 140 LIVE!**  
Zwan in Chicago
- 142 MOVIES**
- 144 DVDS**
- 146 BOOKS**
- 148 GAMES**
- 150 CROSSWORD**



40

ON KELLIN: HAT AND SNEAKERS BY PUMA; SHIRT BY OP; PANTS BY GREY  
ANT. ON TARYN: BIKINI TOP BY DIESEL; SHORTS BY KILLAM; SOCKS BY HUE; CUFF BY FUSE

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Blender is published 10 times per year by Dennis Publishing, Inc.,  
10-40 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10018, Tel (212) 302-2626;  
Fax (212) 302-2635, Internet www.blender.com  
For subscription problems and changes call 877-382-0783





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# CD-REVIEW NIRVANA!

► SOME MAGAZINES review the odd CD. Quite a few magazines print the occasional list. But in the words of Shania Twain, that don't impress me much. Here at *Blender* we like to do things . . . I wouldn't say better, but . . . well, actually, I *would* say better. If we do a list, we do a *list*. And when we review records, we review *the living shit out of them!*

That's why this month I decided to release the review dwarves from their cages and send them on a mission to find the 500 best CDs the world has ever heard. Once their review sacks were full of the finest works by Nirvana, the Beatles, Jay-Z and the like, they dragged them back to me here at *Blender* Towers, where I began laughing maniacally. Just a few short years later, we had evaluated and appraised every last one of 'em.

And here they are: Laid out before you like a table full of ingredients for a perfect meal. Except the meal is a great record collection. And the table is the pages of the magazine. And the cutlery is your fingers. Er, you get the idea.

Enjoy the issuel!

ANDY PEMBERTON  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

► I decided to release the review dwarves from their cages. . . .



At *Blender*, we love records — in the carnal sense.



Mark Seliger/Corbis Outline (Nirvana); TNT Productions (Pemberton)

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# You've Got Mail!

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## SPINE-TINGLING!

The lyric on the spine of your March issue ("After all this, won't you give me a smile?") is from the song "London Calling," by the Clash. Thank you for honoring the late, great Joe Strummer.

STACY KOWALCYK, BEACON, NEW YORK

## JOE STRUMMER, R.I.P.

I imagine that by now you've probably received hundreds if not thousands of letters regarding Joe Strummer's death. He was one of the most underappreciated talents of our time. Although the Clash were considered a punk band, they experimented with other music: reggae, blues, rock & roll, even rap. It's a shame Strummer won't play at the Clash's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March. It's a shame he won't play anymore.

DAIANTE CERVANTES, CHINO, CALIFORNIA

We couldn't have put it better ourselves. Indeed, the news of Strummer's death was met with silent disbelief in the *Blender* office — followed, naturally, by the playing of *London Calling* at maximum volume.

## MISSY ELLIOTT'S RUDE SIGNS

I love *Blender*! It's awesome, and I can't wait each month for the next issue. Can you tell me, though, why Missy Elliott (in the pictures on pages 6 and 72 of your January/February issue) is making the hand sign for *vagina*. I have a degree in American Sign Language, and couldn't resist asking you what she was intending with her pose.

KERI GEE, SLIDELL, LOUISIANA

Isn't it obvious? Miss Missy was giving us

★ Congratulations to the winner of *Blender's* January/February Crossword contest, who walks away with a kickin' Microsoft Windows XP Media Center: Danielle Wink of Delran, New Jersey. Oh, yeah!

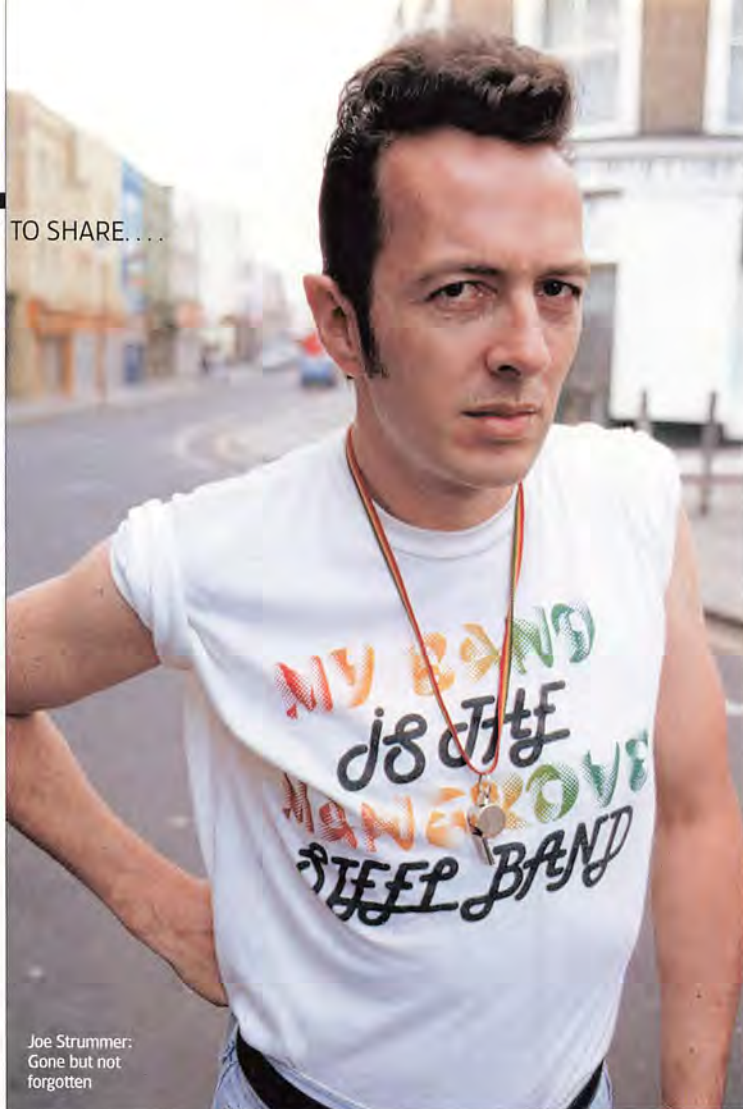
## LISTEN UP! >>



WIN THIS!

CALLING ALL *BLENDER* readers! We want to hear from you! Write us a letter. Tell us your deepest thoughts and secret desires . . . er, well, maybe just your thoughts, then. If we print your letter in our next issue, we'll send you this amazing new SONICblue Rio Sport digital music player for your PC or MAC. It comes with skip-free music playback, at least 64 megs of memory, a stopwatch, a clock, an FM tuner and 15 hours of playback. *Wow!*

Send your letters to Letters to the Editor, *Blender*, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018 Or: [your2cents@blender.com](mailto:your2cents@blender.com). Hell, yes!



Joe Strummer: Gone but not forgotten

a preview of her groundbreaking sign-language version of *The Vagina Monologues*. Possibly.

## SWEARING IS COOL

Says the Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde [Who Does Chrissie Hynde Think She Is?, January/February]: "I'm ugly. Fuck you." I don't think I've ever heard a better rock & roll line. I'm with you, Chrissie: ¡Viva la revolución!

GREG WITHROW, MEMPHIS

## DUDE, ARE WE HIGH?

I'm tickled to see that the drug economy is still going strong in your office, because you must all have been smoking crack when you left Frank Zappa off your list of the Top 50 Rock Geniuses of All Time [January/February]. Too many of today's stars have stolen Zappa's ideas and given no credit to the originator. Please do not add to the raping of rock gods by not recognizing this man.

JUSTIN DAVENPORT, OKEMOS, MICHIGAN

## KISS ARE BETTER THAN THE BEATLES. SORT OF

Let me start by saying your January/February issue was once again the cream of the crop. But in the 50



Gene Simmons: Not just another pretty face

Geniuses list you omitted the group that took marketing to a new level: Kiss! The genius of Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley surely deserves a mention for this alone. Even if you dislike Kiss's music, their ability to sell everything from toilet paper, condoms and pinball machines to comic books, dolls and even caskets is unsurpassed by any group, even the Beatles.

KEITH SKELTON, SIKESTON, MICHIGAN

You're absolutely right. John Lennon and George Harrison must be turning in their graves knowing they wasted all →

if you've only  
seen the movie  
in theaters,  
you've only  
gone half ass.



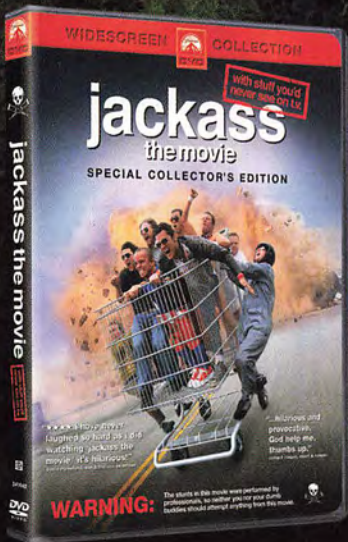
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Shakira collects guitars and magazine photographers.

that time recording *Sgt. Pepper* when they should have concentrated on selling more pinball machines.

#### TONS OF IDEAS!

You guys and your lists: Greatest Songs to Live Your Life By, Most Dastardly Villains, Top 50 Rock Geniuses . . . and now the Sexiest Women in Music, a.k.a. the Rock Goddess 50 [March], led by the beautiful and talented Shakira. Is that just a coincidence, or something we can expect in every issue? If the latter, do you ever get worried that you're going to run out of material?

ALBERT GETZ, PORTLAND, OREGON

Run out of list ideas? Never! As our forthcoming 100 Greatest Debut Albums by Norwegian Quintets will surely prove.

#### SOCK PUPPET!

You've now printed that photo of Moby with the sock on his cock not twice, but three times. Stop it! Ugh! I feel sick!

BETH NAPOLI, CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Sorry. We promise you that we'll never run it again.

#### WE'RE A FAMILY MAGAZINE. IT'S OFFICIAL

I first saw *Blender* in an airport bookstore last June. I scanned through it for about five seconds and decided to buy it based on the fact that it looked like interesting in-flight reading. Now it's January and I've had a subscription for the past four months. I love *Blender*! What sucks is that I'm married and have three daughters in high school. No, they don't suck — what sucks is that I can't keep the magazine at my throne! Almost every day I have to search new areas of my house to find it. Just wanted to let you know that from



Don't ask where Moby keeps his other sock.

## SUPERFAN!

Bringing out the stalker in you since 2001



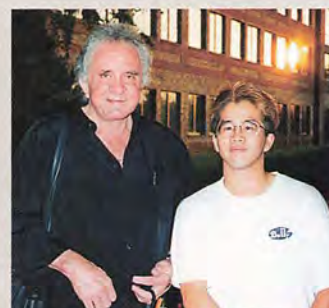
Jennifer Han and 'N Sync's Joey Fatone



Tory Gross and Jennifer Lopez



Vicky Kovar and Bono



Tahei Uchino and Johnny Cash



Shawn Baker and System of a Down's Serj Tankian



Dave Roche and the Strokes' Julian Casablancas



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ages 14 to 41, you're keeping our interest. Keep up the good work.

GUS HUNT AND THE HUNT FAMILY,  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

#### CORRECTION

In Life After Rock [January/February], *Blender* incorrectly identified Rob Leonard of Sha Na Na. The man circled in the photo was Leonard's bandmate Joe Witkin. Leonard is correctly identified in the picture at right. *Blender* regrets the error.



Sha Na Na (Rob Leonard circled at left)

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Score	Vodka	Country
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94	Canadian Iceberg Vodka	Canada
93	Stolichnaya Gold Vodka	Russia
92	Staraya Moskva Premium	Russia
91	Van Hoo Vodka	Belgium
91	Stolichnaya Vodka	Russia
90	Tanqueray Sterling Vodka	England
90	Rain 1995 Harvest Vodka	USA
89	Ketel One Vodka	Holland
88	Wyborowa Vodka	Poland
87	Kremlyovskaya Vodka	Russia
86	Finlandia Vodka of Finland	Finland
86	Alps French Vodka	France
85	Skyy Vodka	USA
82	Original Polish Vodka	Poland
82	Glenmore Special	USA
82	Fleischmann's Royal Vodka	USA
81	Mr. Boston Vodka	USA
80	Pole Star Vodka	Poland
80	Luksusowa Potato Vodka	Poland
80	Absolut Vodka	Sweden
78	Cardinal Vodka	Holland
78	Barton Vodka	USA
78	Barclay's Vodka	USA
78	Amazon Vodka	Brazil
76	Skol Vodka	USA
74	Smirnoff Vodka	USA
74	Crystal Palace Vodka	USA
74	Belvedere	Poland
72	Schenley	USA
69	Mr. Boston's Riva Vodka	USA

NOTE: THIS REPRESENTS A SAMPLING OF THE 40 VODKAS TESTED  
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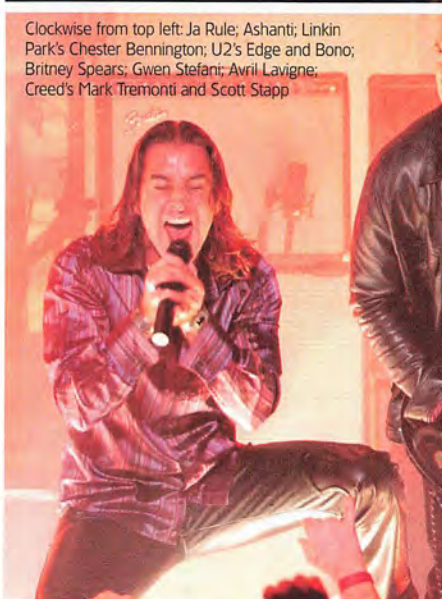
# BURNER

ALL THE MUSIC. ALL THE NEWS. ALL THE TIME

★ COURTNEY LOVE GOES NUTS! ★ THE FLAMING LIPS ★ EMINEM'S DAD >>



Clockwise from top left: Ja Rule; Ashanti; Linkin Park's Chester Bennington; U2's Edge and Bono; Britney Spears; Gwen Stefani; Avril Lavigne; Creed's Mark Tremonti and Scott Stapp



## Blender Saves the Record

Drooping profits, falling sales, tech-savvy consumers — is the record industry utterly screwed? No way! Blender's got a plan to save it!



THE RECORD INDUSTRY is facing the biggest challenge in its history after the CD sales-tracking service SoundScan reported a massive drop in sales for 2002. Major record companies blame the Internet, claiming that approximately 2.7 billion music files are downloaded each month — more than half of which are burned onto CDs.

As a result, they say, CD sales were down 11 percent in 2002, and sales in the first quarter of 2003 are also low — so bad that the soundtrack to the musical *Chicago* nearly came in at the top of the charts.

Brick-and-mortar retailers are shuttering outlets across the country — Trans World Entertainment has closed 40 stores, and Best Buy has closed 110 of its Musicland stores and 90 Sam Goody shops. The Wherehouse Music chain has closed 150 outlets and declared bankruptcy.

Layoffs abound. One of Clive Davis's first acts after assuming the top job at the RCA Music Group was to slash the company's workforce by almost 25 percent.

Longtime free-spending Sony Music kingpin Tommy Mottola resigned on January 9, and a TV

executive with no music experience at all — Andrew Lack, the former president of NBC — was brought in to stop Sony's financial bleeding and, presumably, help create a new business model that will help move the business toward the digital future.

On January 16, MCA Records president Jay Boberg resigned after

**"The record companies' whole model has collapsed."**





# Industry

seven years. Rumors abound that AOL Time Warner will sell off its faltering Warner Bros. Records division.

"The record companies' whole model has collapsed or is broken," says Kunitake Ando, Sony's president and chief operating officer. "It's very clear that we have to change the way we do business in the music industry, because they're probably hard-hit from the network age."

Luckily, Blender has devised a fiendishly cunning 10-step plan that details precisely how to save the music industry. **JOE FLEISCHER**

## BLENDER'S 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR SAVING THE RECORD INDUSTRY! >>>>>

1. STOP BULLYING THE CUSTOMER!  
 2. BE MORE PRO-ARTIST!  
 3. BRING THE MOUNTAIN TO THE CUSTOMER!  
 4. GET CONTROL OF PRODUCTION COSTS!  
 5. RADIO SHOULD ELIMINATE BOGUS RESEARCH!  
 6. GET CONTROL OF LABEL PROMOTION COSTS!  
 7. GET USED TO YOUR DOWNSIZED ASSES!  
 8. LOWER CD PRICES!  
 9. REMEMBER, IT'S ABOUT THE MUSIC!  
 10. LEAVE INDIE RECORDS TO INDIE LABELS!

### 1 STOP BULLYING YOUR CUSTOMERS!

Since the advent of file-sharing, relations between record companies and their consumers have turned poisonous. From public reprimands of music swappers to witch hunts of suspected song sharers, labels have bit-ten the hands that feed them.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Lay off the just-say-no drug-narc mentality and learn that file sharers are your friends.



### 2 BE MORE PRO-ARTIST!

In the early days of the record business, many top-selling artists — particularly African-Americans — would be sportingly paid in Cadillacs in lieu of the millions they were owed in royalties. According to stars like the Dixie Chicks and Don Henley, things haven't progressed much since then.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Restructure contracts to ensure that more artists can at least modestly succeed. And stop the funny accounting.

### 3 BRING THE MOUNTAIN TO THE CUSTOMER

Fans already acquire more music through file-swapping services like KaZaa and LimeWire than through CD sales, but the record companies' "Napster alternatives," such as PressPlay and MusicNet, are dismal.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Listen up, Mr. Suit: Labels need to just say yes to peer-to-peer file swapping, and then charge a set licensing fee to the cable providers and Internet Service Provider whose profit margins are fattened by downloaders. Remember: 100 million downloaders can't be wrong!



### 4 GET CONTROL OF PRODUCTION COSTS

If fans tend to download singles only (meaning they don't always want the whole CD), then maybe it doesn't make sense to spend a million bucks making the other 16 tracks just yet.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Release your artist's single online, get paid via your smart new download-licensing fee and then decide whether to foot the studio costs for more songs.

### 5 RADIO SHOULD ELIMINATE BOGUS RESEARCH

When radio research firms randomly dial numbers in the station's market, play snippets of what may or may not be the song's hook and then ask a series of leading questions to people who may or may not even listen to radio, it's not really science, is it?

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Take a tip from consumer brands like Coca-Cola and Levi's: Pay attention to what people actually do instead of what they say they do.

### 6 GET CONTROL OF LABEL PROMOTION COSTS

In order to get their songs on the radio, labels that are already handsomely employing their own promotion staffs fork out fortunes to oily independent radio-promotion firms.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Bring the costs in-house, or keep them out of house — but choose one avenue and stay on it!



### 7 GET USED TO YOUR DOWNSIZED ASSES!

Repeat after us: I am a suit, not a rock star. Say buh-bye to the go-go, coke-fueled glory days of the business. Jetting around on your Gulfstream and spending profligate sums of company money on "talent scouting" in Capri is 5000 five minutes ago.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** All CEOs of record labels should take a 10 percent pay cut to regain the confidence of their shareholders and of consumers.

### 8 LOWER CD PRICES

Every eleventh-grader knows that CDs are overpriced. If

the choice is 17 B2K songs for \$17.99 or one XXX DVD for the same chunk of change, Blender's money is on Vin Diesel.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** If labels slashed production costs and implemented Blender's peer-to-peer licensing fee, the reduced income from cheaper CDs would be less painful. And who knows, they might even sell more discs!

### 9 REMEMBER, IT'S ABOUT THE MUSIC

Some of the biggest records of the last two years (Norah Jones, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, Josh Groban) didn't come from format-friendly artists with "crossover potential." People like good music and don't care about formats.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** If one-hit wonders are killing your business, don't promote them. Bruce Springsteen and U2 would have lost their deals after one album had they been signed today.

### 10 LEAVE INDIE RECORDS TO INDIE LABELS

Not every band that has patiently built an audience through touring and self-released records benefits from the moneyed backing of a major label.

**BLENDER SUGGESTS:** Majors should be signing fewer artists and then lavishing more resources on them. Leave the rest to the indies, who can devote the love and attention necessary to sustain the careers of mid-size artists.



The Dixie Chicks (from left): Emily Robison, Martie Seidel, Natalie Maines

Pat Page/Retna UK (Ja Rule), Ray Tang/Rex Features (Ashanti), Sven Hooghebaert/WireImage.com (Bennington), Jason Squares/WireImage.com (Shelani), Larry Busacca/WireImage.com (Lainey), Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com (Creech), Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com (U2), Steven Lasker/WireImage.com (Spears), Alphonse Reynonde (fall-ble), AP Photo/Rick Field (Coke), Courtesy of Sony Music (Dixie Chicks), Kurt Sutter/WireImage.com (jet)



That's a very small accordion, Joe.

Do You Rock? ★

Joe Jackson

Does the skinny-tied pianist behind the '80s hit "Steppin' Out" still rock?

Worst rock & roll injury?

Once, we played to these skinheads who showered us with beer glasses. I looked down and there was blood all over the keyboard. I'd been cut but was in such shock I didn't even feel it. Back then, the better gigs were the ones where you didn't get beaten up.

Strangest thing you've eaten?

In Iceland, there's this thing called *hakarl*. It's putrid shark meat that's been buried underground for months. It reeks of ammonia and has the consistency of cheese — it's the most disgusting thing you can imagine. They make you eat it, and then they all stare at you. I didn't like it.

Got a stripper's pole in your house?

No, but I used to play piano in a Playboy Club. It was bizarre — all these bunny girls running around. Most of them were very charming. Very nice college girls.

Least rockin' city?

I might be allergic to Los Angeles. I once had this taxi driver who looked like Charles Manson — he was out of his mind and got us hopelessly lost to the point where we had to get out of the cab. And the cab driver was still following us. Weird stuff like that happens in L.A.

Best high?

There's really nothing like being onstage playing music you love with people you love to people who are loving it. That all sounds corny, but it's true. It's an incredible high. And Ecstasy's not bad, too.

Who would win a no-holds-barred street fight between you and Elvis Costello?

He's got a little more weight than me. But I'm taller. It could go either way. STEVE LOWE

VERDICT

BY THE THREAD OF HIS VERY SKINNY TIE, JOE JACKSON... STILL ROCKS!

→ JOE JACKSON'S NEW ALBUM, *VOLUME 4 (RESTLESS/RYKODISC)*, IS OUT NOW.

News Roundup!

**THE UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP**, the most profitable record company in America, canceled its annual post-Grammy Awards celebration, fearing violence between rival rap stars.

**JERRY HALL** is reportedly looking for a new house. She has apparently tired of her home in southwest London, where she has been subject to frequent, unwanted visits from her ex-husband and next-door neighbor, **MICK JAGGER**.

**JAY-Z** has said that his next album will be his last.

**KURT COBAIN's** black Stratocaster guitar, used on Nirvana's breakthrough *Nevermind* tour in 1991, is expected to fetch \$20,000 when it is auctioned in London.



Why don't all bodyguards look like Kylie Minogue's?

Under Where?

Exactly: Kylie Minogue and Paulina Rubio unveil their panties!

★ SAUCY SINGERS Kylie Minogue and Paulina Rubio are using their stardom to push upscale panties.

Minogue, 34, has launched a line of racy lingerie, Love Kylie, exclusive to the London-based department store Selfridges. The line, unveiled in December, features underwear with "peek-a-boo keyholes," plus black fishnet bras and baby-doll slips.



"It's sexy but still girl-next-door," said the comely star.

Meanwhile, Rubio, 31, took to the runway for the debut of designer Toton Comella's clothing line, TCN, during Fashion Week in Barcelona, Spain, in February. The Latin pop star made appearances in both classic low-rise '60s-style lingerie and bathing suits.

"I had a lot of fun and I really enjoyed the moment," Rubio told *Blender*. "But music is my life. Modeling is a hobby." CLARISSA LASKY

Word!



"He enjoyed it. He started to respond by going 'Eeeee!' "

MICHAEL JACKSON, DESCRIBING HOW MUCH HIS INFANT SON "BLANKET" LIKED BEING DANGLED OVER A HOTEL BALCONY

★ Pop Star Must-Have

CIGARETTES!

Smoking is so now! It's fashionable and makes you look cool. Cough. Splutter. *Blorgh!*



"Kiss my butt! Ha!"



Marianne Faithfull and Ryan Adams



Ms. Dynamite



Slash and Ron Wood



Britney Spears

Time to disappear.  
You'll pop up in a truck stop  
where your name is "hon."



# The Next Big Thing!

## BOOMKAT

Taryn Manning has played a drug addict and Eminem's ex. Next up: rock star!

BY NICK DUERDEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

★ TARYN MANNING IS a familiar face. You might remember her as the drug addict from the Kirsten Dunst movie *Crazy/Beautiful*, or from the recent Gap ad in which she sings alongside Marianne Faithfull. She had a bit part in last winter's premier chick flick, *White Oleander*, and she also made a small but pivotal appearance in *8 Mile* as Eminem's ex-girlfriend. But acting is just one of her skills. Alongside her brother, Kellin, she makes up half of Boomkat, a pop-loving, hip-hop-influenced duo whose witty, innovative debut, *Boomkatalog One*, is about to be released. Finally.

"This album has been done forever, and the record company misled us as to when it was going to be released," says the 24-year-old Manning. "Which is unfair, because I've turned down film roles in order to focus on the music. I'm sooo frustrated!"

Taryn and Kellin, 29, decided to make music a couple of years ago, before the frustration — when

they found themselves simply depressed in what were becoming their turbulent twenties.

"I'd just been fired from a movie — no reason given, just fired — and Kellin was fired from his latest store job. He gets fired a lot," she recalls. Kellin was a lifetime disciple of the Beatles, and a prodigious composer. But he was also rather shy — which was where his sister came in. "He was making all this amazing music, but he was also never coming out of the house. I dragged him out, because I knew these songs were special!"

The result is a Beck-meets-Nelly Furtado loop-laden casserole of pop and hip-hop. Why, you may ask? "I grew up on Motown, R&B, dance music," Manning says. "I always thought there was a side of me that was black." Naturally. [BLENDER]

»» OUT THIS MONTH  
BOOMKATALOG ONE DREAMWORKS



Wardrobe styling: Erika Scott; hair: William Williams for Love; makeup: Lauren Cohen for Love

We know it. And you know it. But do you think siblings Kellin and Taryn Manning know this is just... wrong?

> A Beck-meets-Nelly Furtado loop-laden casserole of pop and hip-hop.

ON KELLIN: JACKET AND SHIRT BY MODERN AMUSEMENT. PANTS BY GREY ANT. SHOES AND HAT BY PUMA. ON TARYN: BIKINI TOP BY DIESEL. SHORTS BY KILLAR. SOCKS BY HUE. ORANGE CLIFF BY FUSE FUSESTYLE.COM

"ONE OF THE SCARIEST, MOST ORIGINAL  
HORROR MOVIES IN YEARS."

— Ron Blackwelder, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER



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- MUDVAYNE *Not Falling* Music Video

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Britney: "Hey you!"

Fred: "Screw you!"

## Britney-Hater?

Has a bitter Fred Durst written a hate anthem about Britney Spears?

THE FIRST TASTE of the new Limp Bizkit album is a torrent of girl-hate that could be aimed at Fred Durst's rumored ex-squeeze Britney Spears.

The hate-filled song, "Just Drop Dead," rails against an unfaithful lover at considerable length, and includes the couplet "I deserve more, I deserve more/You act like a whore, so just drop dead."

The tune could be referring to Spears, who was romantically linked with Durst recently — even though she has denied it.

"We worked together for three days, and he's a really cool guy, but there's no relationship. . . . He's really sweet," she said at the time. For his part, Durst said on Bizkit's Web site, "No one [except Spears] had ever made me feel this way before."

A spokesperson for Bizkit's management company claimed not to be aware of any connection between "Just Drop Dead" and Spears. Limp Bizkit's publicist declined to comment.

The hateful tune can be heard at [www.limpbizkit.com](http://www.limpbizkit.com) on MP3 format. Limp Bizkit's new album, now titled *Bipolar*, is due in May. **ROB KEMP**

## News Roundup!

**MICHAEL JACKSON** is being sued by venerable auction house Sotheby's for not paying the \$1.3 million he bid for two nineteenth-century paintings by William Adolphe Bougerea.

At the Sundance Film Festival recently, **BRITNEY SPEARS** walked out of the new Robert Downey Jr. movie, *The Singing Detective*, saying later that she disliked the festival's selections in general and *Detective* in particular: "The [Sundance] movies are weird — you actually have to think about them when you watch them."

Public Enemy's **CHUCK D.** is kick-starting a publishing empire, *Offda Books*, by detailing pioneering rapper **KOOL MOE DEE's** top 50 MCs of all time.

A 35-year-old Englishman has changed his name to **OZZY OSBOURNE**. The former Robert Jacques credits the heavy-metal icon's songs with rousing him from a three-month coma brought on by a motorcycle accident.



Wake up, guys! You're performing, for chrissakes!

## Quackers!

**Courtney Love** visits London, dresses like a duck, goes berserk

☆ **CONCERN GROWS** for Courtney Love, whose behavior during a series of visits to Britain has become increasingly erratic.

In January, a British rock magazine printed pictures from a bizarre photo session in which the 38-year-old Hole singer streaked around London dressed in only a pair of panties. The overexcited star hailed a surprised cab driver, and lay down in a main road. Earlier she ordered a stylist: "Wax my anus!" Insiders were at a loss to explain this lively performance.

Returning to the U.K. on February 4, Love was arrested upon landing at Heathrow Airport after calling a stewardess a "bitch" during the flight. Although Virgin Airlines initially threatened to prosecute, Love was released after 11 hours with only a warning.

Love capped her high-spirited London visit at a glitzy charity event the following day. After singing "Don't Let the Sun Go Down On

Me" with Elton John, she returned onstage dressed as Donald Duck before stripping again — this time down to a fishnet body stocking.

At the benefit, Love ran into Virgin mogul Richard Branson, who later claimed she requested free return tickets to Los Angeles. Virgin refused.

But Love hit the warpath when she came back to the U.S., complaining that she "spent 12 hours in prison just for the use of the word *bitch*. I'm literally blameless." **STEVE LOWE**

**"Wax my anus!"**

COURTNEY LOVE



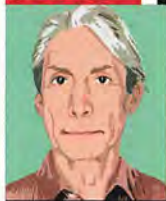
## Tell Us a Joke!

### ROB ZOMBIE

“A GUY GOES out all night drinking. He gets really wasted and sick. He goes home and the next day says to his friend, "That's the last time I'm drinking Bud Light. I drank a case of Bud Light last night and I blew chunks, man." The friend says, "Dude, it's not the Bud Light. You drink a case of any beer and you'll blow chunks." The guy says, "You don't understand. Chunks is my dog." AS TOLD TO HUGH G. REXION



### Word!



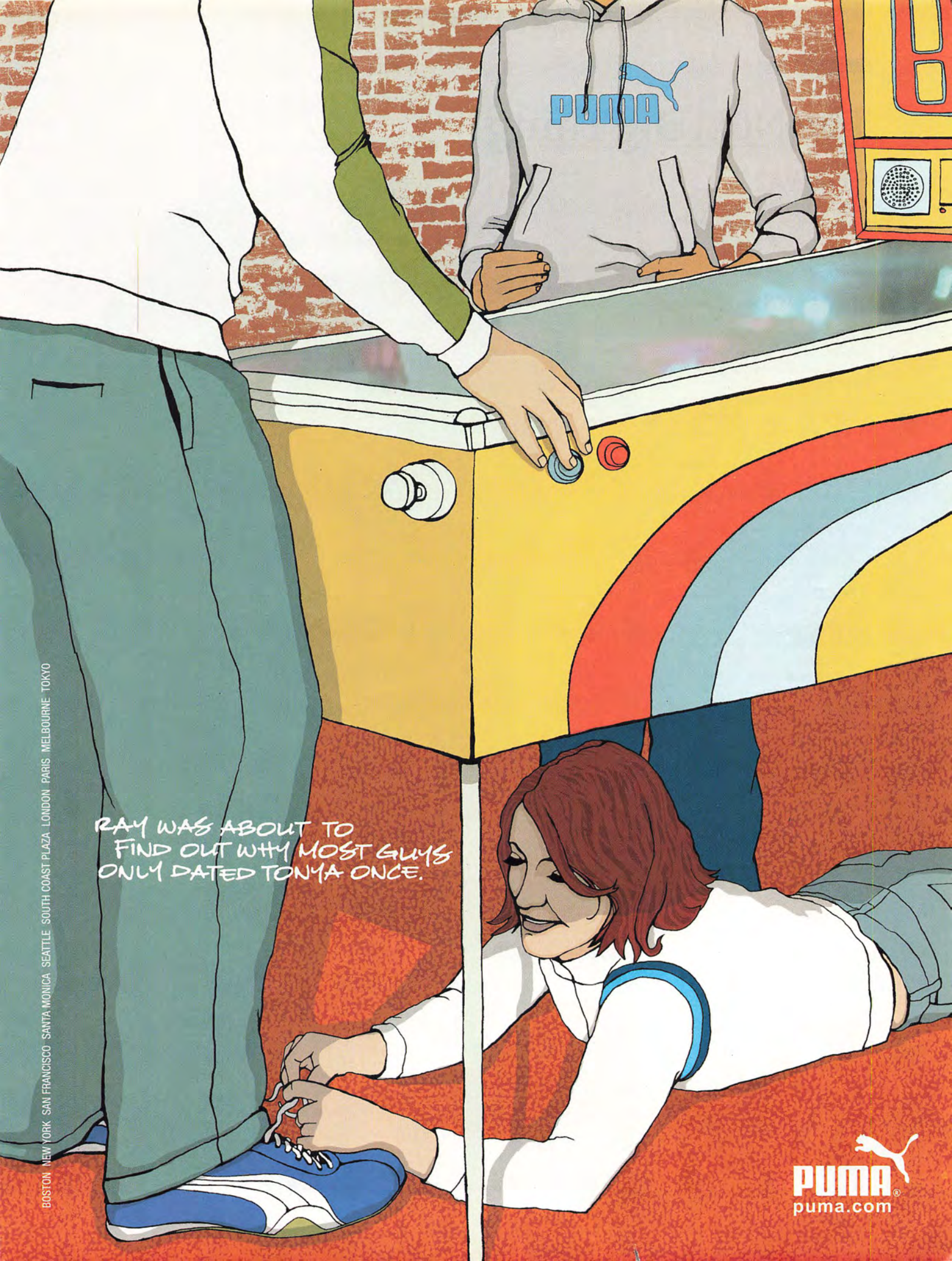
### "Both."

ROLLING STONES DRUMMER CHARLIE WATTS, WHEN ASKED IF HE WAS BORED OR SIMPLY SPORTING HIS USUAL EXPRESSION



"You'll never take me alive! Oh, you have."





RAY WAS ABOUT TO  
FIND OUT WHY MOST GUYS  
ONLY DATED TONYA ONCE.

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# The Next Big Thing!

## **FREEWAY**

Guns! Drugs! Islam!  
It's a winning combination  
for this Jay-Z protégé!

BY NICK DUERDEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDY HARRIS

★ FREEWAY SITS IN his manager's office in downtown Philadelphia, stroking the straggly beard that signifies his Islamic faith. Jay-Z's latest rap prodigy may have grown up surrounded by guns and drugs, but he is still proudly Muslim.

"I'm at a point in my life where I'm not doing everything I'm supposed to do as far as the religion goes," he shrugs. "I strayed, but I'm on my way back."

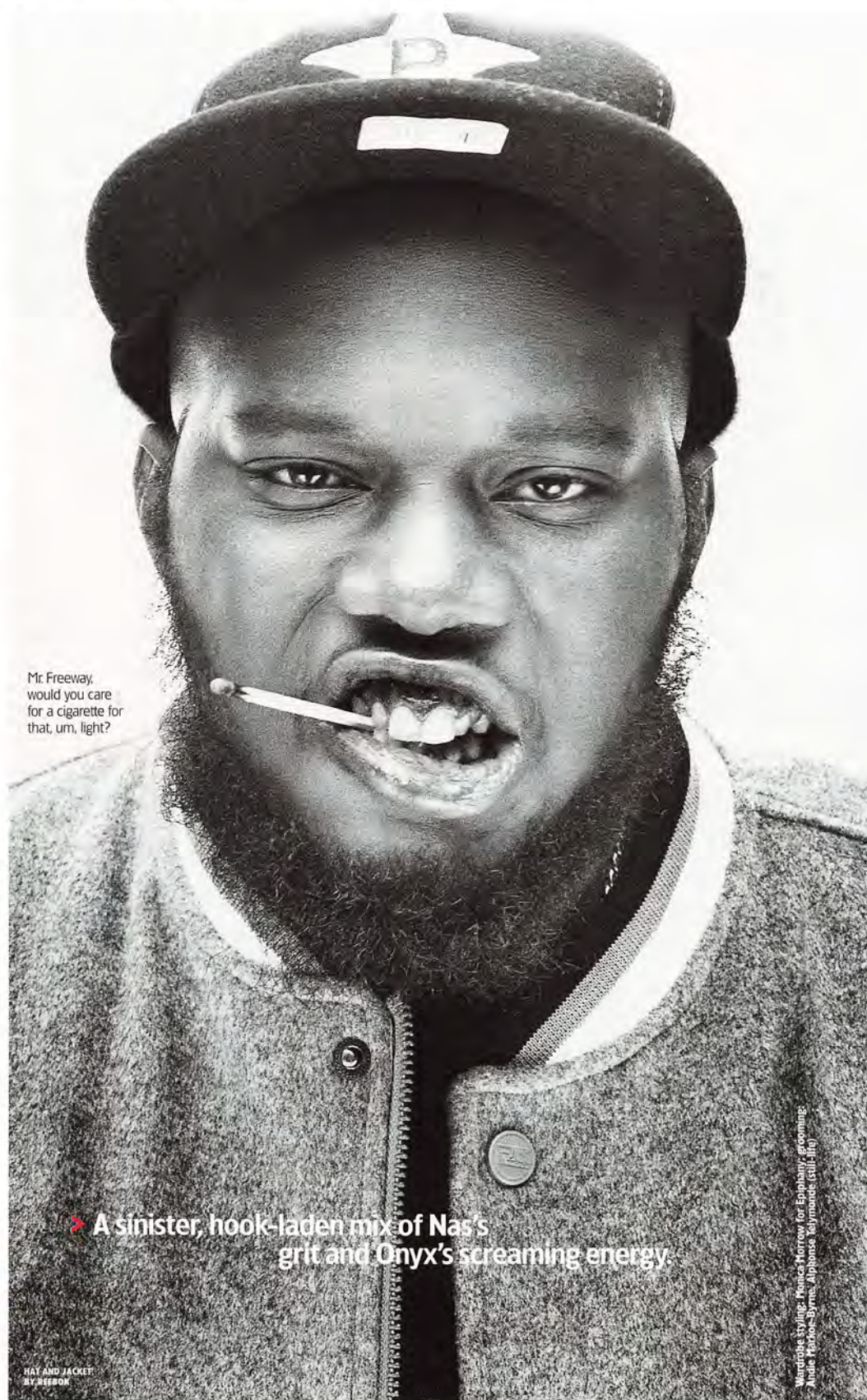
Born Leslie Pridgen in North Philadelphia in 1978, Freeway has been rapping seriously since turning 17. But in 1995, still four years away from meeting his rap-superstar benefactor, the man everyone called Freeway needed cash. So he took to selling drugs all over Philly, cruising up and down — yes — the freeway, day and night. Then things went bad: One girlfriend got pregnant, and a couple of months later, so did another. Then he got busted and went to jail.

"That played on my mind a lot," he says. "I had to do something positive in my life, and that's what I did!"

Jay-Z, who had previously met Freeway, was impressed with his musical menace and his hard-knock tales of inner-city life. Freeway soon signed a deal, and his debut, *Philadelphia Freeway* — a sinister, hook-laden mix of Nas's grit and Onyx's screaming energy — is about to hit stores.

"Some people say I've got an irritating voice," he says in, well, quite an irritating voice. "They say it's squeaky and would drive them crazy over the length of an album." He shakes his head, fingers lost inside his beard. "Me? I don't see it. I'm a breath of fresh air!" [BLENDER]

»»» **OUT THIS MONTH**  
PHILADELPHIA FREEWAY DEF JAM



Mr Freeway, would you care for a cigarette for that, um, light?

HAT AND JACKET BY BEESON

» A sinister, hook-laden mix of Nas's grit and Onyx's screaming energy.


Wardrobe styling: Monica Morrow for Eppahany; grooming: Annie Parsons-Byrne; Alphonse Velymande (citi-life)



- MAXIM

# *the* **Getaway**

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WRITTEN BY BRENDAN MCNAMARA AND KATIE ELLWOOD ORIGINAL SCORE ANDREW HALE GAME DESIGN CHUN WAH KONG DIRECTED BY BRENDAN MCNAMARA

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Ben Affleck and J.Lo: If those asses could talk.

## ASS SQUEEZE IS THE NEW MAIN SQUEEZE

AND OTHER LATE-BREAKING DEVELOPMENTS



Moving back to L.A. because you hate the weather

is the new

Moving to London because you love the tradition

Macaulay Culkin corrupting Marilyn Manson with cigarette smoking

is the new

Marilyn Manson corrupting America with Satanic rhetoric

Lou Reed, fitness proponent of Chen Tai Chi

is the new

Lou Reed, junkie proponent of heroin

Pee-Wee Herman, "archivist of historical erotica"

is the new

Pee-Wee Herman, porno-theater troll

Winona wanting to resell Saks Fifth Avenue wares

is the new

Winona wanting to steal Saks Fifth Avenue wares



Mick Jagger's alleged Botox

is the new

Mick Jagger's libido

Eminem not wanting to be an actor

is the new

Eminem starring in a movie based on his life

Iglesias and Kournikova — over!

is the new

Klum and Kiedis — over!



## News Roundup!

Kiss bassist **GENE SIMMONS** has reactivated the defunct Simmons Records. In the '80s, the label released hair-metal albums by House of Lords, Silent Rage and Gypsy Rose, but is now targeting hip-hop and modern-rock acts.

**BRITNEY SPEARS** is now juggling boyfriends **FRED DURST**, ex-squeeze **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** and actor **COLIN FARRELL**, insiders say.

Two songs by fashionable New York art-rockers **INTERPOL** will appear in the next season of HBO's series *Six Feet Under*, in a scene set in a "hip record store."

Fast-moving pianist **VANESSA CARLTON** is aiming to release what she calls "a *Sgt. Pepper's* by a solo girl" — a.k.a., her forthcoming second album, which features "choruses and flutes and trumpets."



The always wise-cracking Wayne Coyne informs Justin Timberlake that he's not "in sync."

## Lip Service!

Why did Justin Timberlake jam with high priests of cool the Flaming Lips on a TV pop show?



★ VIEWERS OF THE British music TV show *Top of the Pops* were treated to an unexpected surprise recently when Justin

Timberlake joined the Flaming Lips onstage as they played their single "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots Pt. 1." Timberlake filled the unlikely role of bass player.

The pairing was the brainchild of Lips lead singer Wayne Coyne, who

learned that Britney Spears's former flame would be in the studio on the day of the performance. Coyne became determined to make a play for him.

"Wayne knew that an old girlfriend of Justin's was a huge Flaming Lips fan, which meant he had probably heard of them himself," a spokeswoman for the Flaming Lips said. "Wayne insisted on asking him."

Timberlake readily accepted the offer to play bass — in the animal outfit of his choice, as is customary for the band.

"He was offered the rabbit, the panda or the dolphin," said the spokeswoman. "He took the dolphin, and as soon as the cameras started rolling, he removed the head — much to the surprise of the studio audience, which went wild."

There are no plans for the Flaming Lips to collaborate on one of Timberlake's numbers. *NICK DUERDEN*



It was a one-night stand he would regret.

### Word!



"Our commitment is to uplift readers, especially women and children."

AUTHOR **KIM L. DULANEY**, ON THE REISSUE OF HER BOOK *I CAN FLY? (THE R. KELLY STORY)*, A CHILDREN'S BOOK BASED ON THE SINGER

14) there are no rules.



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Paul Simonon (left) and Mick Jones at a February awards ceremony in London



Joe Strummer

## “Everyone’s Still Grieving”

“Last Gang in Town” too grief-stricken to perform at two prestigious events

★ THE REMAINING members of the Clash were invited to perform at the Grammys but were too grief-stricken over the death of frontman Joe Strummer to perform, *Blender* has learned.

“It was too soon, everyone’s still grieving,” said Tricia Ronane, bassist Paul Simonon’s wife and the Clash’s long-time business manager. Instead, a tribute lineup performed, including Elvis Costello, Bruce Springsteen and Little Steven, and the Clash’s proposed involvement went unannounced.

But the Clash’s induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on March 10 will be marked by an unprecedented public gathering of band, old friends and family – although an onstage reunion seems improbable.

“Joe and Mick [Jones, guitarist] wanted to do it, and Topper [Headon, drummer] would definitely have joined in,” said Ronane, “but Paul was adamant he had no interest because he dislikes awards and thought it was too exclusive an occasion for the Clash.” Just before his death last

December 22, Strummer was still trying to persuade Simonon. “But when Joe passed on,” said Ronane, “we all decided that, because he had been so enthusiastic about it, we would all go en masse.”

The Clash table will be surrounded by Strummer’s widow, Lucinda; his daughters, Lola and Jazz; Jones and his girlfriend, Miranda, and maybe their baby daughter, Stella; Simonon and Ronane; Headon (now playing in a pub

band in Dover); original drummer Terry Chimes; former road manager Johnny Green and publicist Cosmo Vinyl.

“We’re going to make it joyous and celebrate the Clash’s career,” says Ronane. As to whether there might be any “getting up” with star guests, she said only that “something might happen.”

The band decided not to perform, Ronane says, because “it wouldn’t be right without Joe.” PHIL SUTCLIFFE

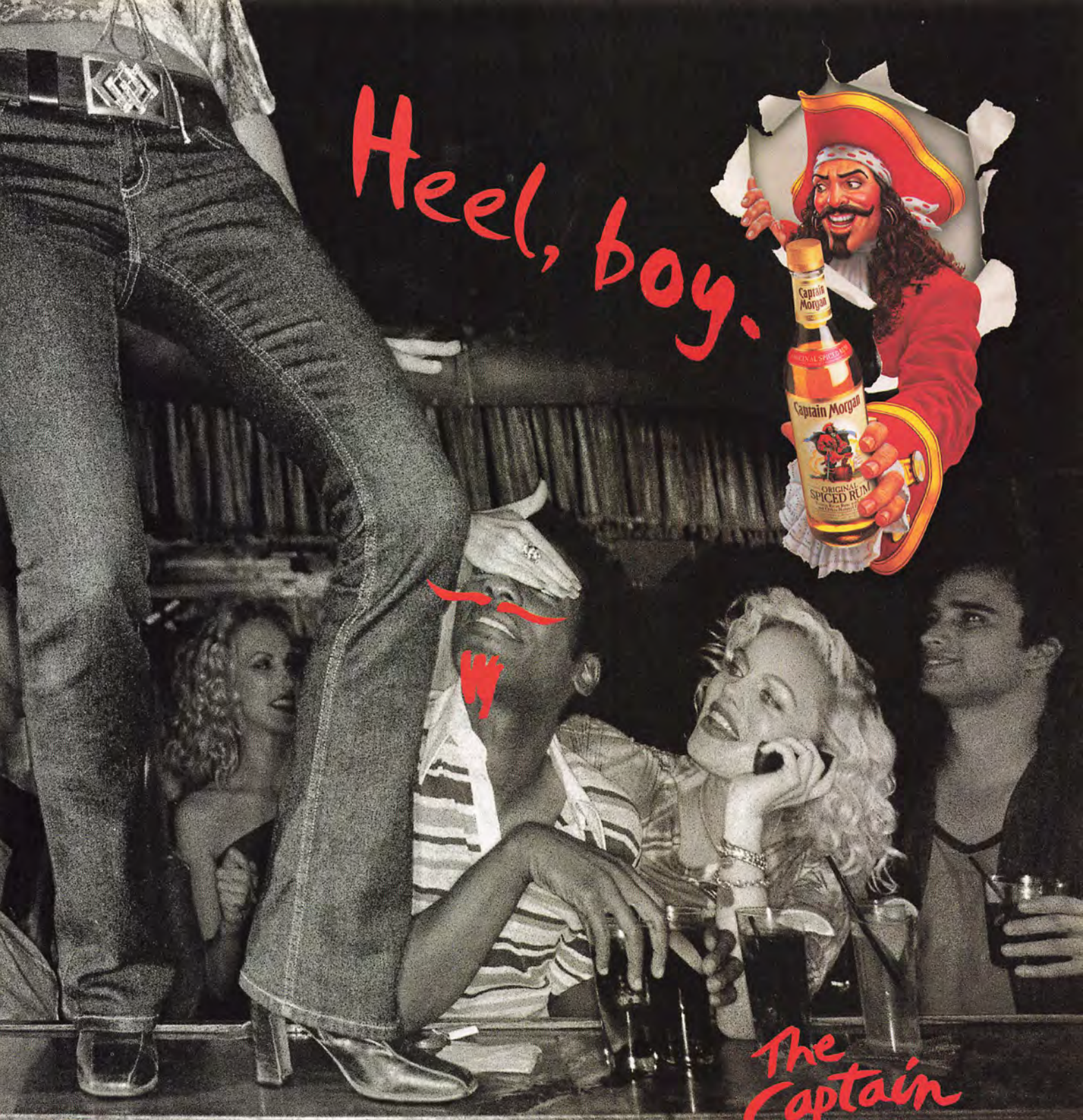
“It wouldn’t be right without Joe.”



The Clash (from left): Mick Jones, Topper Headon, Paul Simonon, Joe Strummer

Dave Hogan/Hulton-WebImage.com (Simonon and Jones), Michael Putland/Dietma UK (Strummer), urbainimage.tv/Adrian Boot (band)

Heel, boy.



The Captain was here



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# WHOA!

Mariah Carey shows a little leg on TV — and then a little more!



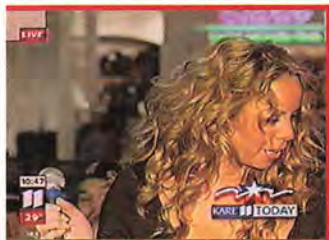
A SPOKESWOMAN FOR Mariah Carey has denied the superstar inadvertently exposed herself, *Basic Instinct*-style, to hundreds of fans gathered at Minnesota's Mall of America — as well as thousands of TV viewers — for Minneapolis-St. Paul's *KARE-11 Today* morning show. So what really happened . . . ?



The singer is being interviewed by cohosts Roxane Battle and Pat Evans. All three are seated above the crowd atop a makeshift stage.



During the discussion, Carey is interrupted by an assistant.



"We have a problem here," the star says.



Carey stands up, adjusts her dress and then sits back down with her legs tightly crossed. Carey's assistant tosses a jacket over her lap. "We didn't know that I was going to sit up on a platform," explains the flustered singer, "or I would have worn a longer dress." "She was not naked underneath as far as I know," said a Carey spokeswoman later. **ROBERTA COLON**

## News Roundup!

Indian composer Bappi Lahiri has won a court injunction preventing the sale of Dr. Dre protégée **TRUTH HURTS**'s self-titled debut album and the single "Addictive," based on claims that the hit song sampled his composition "Thoda Resham Lagta Hai" without credit.

Prosecutors are weighing whether to serve **ARETHA FRANKLIN** with a subpoena following claims that she has repeatedly said she was "too tired" to talk with officials investigating the October 2002 fire that gutted her Michigan home.

The Kabbalah Center, whose teachings influenced **MADONNA**'s forthcoming album, has been lambasted by a "cult expert" for promoting dubious products deviating from standard Kabbalah teaching.

## Word!



**"Since I made the film, I make it my business to say hello to the maids and people working in the hotel — all the people I'd usually just whiz past."**

**JENNIFER LOPEZ, ON HOW MAID IN MANHATTAN CHANGED HER LIFE**

## ★ Where Are They Now? ★

# Life After Rock



## Danny Smythe

The Box Tops

**THEN!**  
Drummer and cofounder,  
1967-1968

**NOW!**  
Freelance product illustrator,  
Plainfield, Illinois

★ "IT WAS 1967, the summer of love. We had the number 1 record in the country ["The Letter"]. It was like a dream. That's when the hippie movement started. Our manager bought us these Ivy League uniforms. We were going to be like the Buckinghams. And then this third gig we played was a music festival in Dallas. The Doors played after us.

And we were blown away. We said, 'OK, we're ditching the uniforms — we're going to become hippies!' "Alex [Chilton, the Box Tops' singer] was the star. He was the one who had the girls lining up to get into his room. The problem was, Alex was 16 and had all these 14- and 15-year-old girls lining up — jailbait. We would tell him, 'No, Alex, I know you want to, but you can't — their fathers are going to come along and put you in jail!'"

"Our manager stole from us terribly. He figured we were one-

hit wonders, so he took every single gig that came along. The most famous was when we played three shows in three different cities in one night.

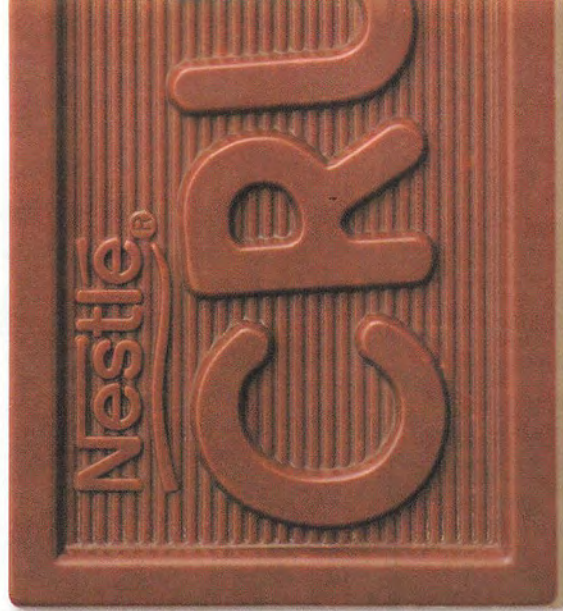
"I had to drop out and get back into school or get drafted, one thing or the other. I hated giving up all that fame, but being on the road all the time was tough.

"I always figured I could make money doing art — I've done a lot of stuff for Wish-Bone salad dressing, Miracle-Gro. I've done a lot of stuff for Glad bags, too. You have to find something to go into every day in order to have a steady flow of money. Music is so up-and-down. It's not anything to base your life on." AS TOLD TO MARK GUARINO

**"I hated giving up fame, but being on the road was tough."**







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Shakira, you look different somehow.

## WAX ON!

Why, exactly, is Shakira wearing a candelabra on her head?

SHAKIRA WOWED audiences in Barcelona, Spain, recently when she performed her hit "Whenever, Wherever" with a candelabra on her head.

According to the Colombian singer, the centerpiece of her show at Barcelona's Palau Sant Jordi arena has symbolic significance.

"I've heard Indian dance and Moroccan dance cited as origins for [the routine]," Shakira said. "When I do the candle, I think of all the ritual uses and meanings of fire and incense. It can be the fire of life, the spark of life, in us all."

"It's Arabic folk dance. She's doing this because she's half-Lebanese and wants to show everybody what her culture is," explained Oreet Jehassi, a belly-dance instructor. CLARISSA LASKY

## News Roundup!

**JOHN DENSMORE**, the former drummer for the Doors, is suing the group's other surviving members, **RAY MANZAREK** and **ROBBIE KRIEGER**, to stop them from using the name the Doors.

**MTV** has apologized for including a parody of Mahatma Gandhi on *Clone High*, the network's new animated comedy program, after Indian officials protested.

Rapper **JUVENILE** was arrested in New Orleans for possession of cocaine and marijuana.

An **MTV** programming executive has denied reports that the network plans to ax **THE OSBOURNES**, whose ratings have slumped almost by half in recent months.

A **DEF LEPPARD** eBay charity auction will let the winner sing the aging rockers' '80s anthem "Pour Some Sugar on Me" onstage at a gig in the band's hometown, Sheffield, England.

## ★ In the Studio



"We don't need no stinkin' guitarist... la la la..."

# "We're All Drug Takers!"

This is just one pungent notion found on **Blur's** latest — and grooviest — album, recorded with one key member missing

★ "WE'RE ALL DRUG takers," says Damon Albarn. That's why the Blur frontman has dedicated a song on the band's new album to drugs. Loads of them.

"The verses are a list of about 50 drugs, from cocaine to aspirin," Albarn, 35, says. "There's a philosophical question to be asked about what the function of drugs is in our society."

Albarn's been indulging in this most recent bout of philosophy while polishing up the new album, which he says might be titled *Darklife* (a play on Blur's 1994 breakthrough, *Parklife*) or *Think Tank*.

This sociopolitical/pharmaceutical focus also coincides with the departure of guitarist Graham Coxon, who left Blur in late 2001.

Why did the self-confessed alcoholic and avid socializer leave? "He's an inspirational musician when he's

in tune," Albarn says, "but I don't know what his problem is. I spent years asking him how I could help."

"It's going to be one of those rock & roll situations where time passes, and then everyone will be all right again," Albarn adds with a sigh. "I'd make up with him tomorrow — you don't stop loving people like that."

Coxon's departure has also affected the alt-rock band's sound. According to Albarn, the 17 songs recorded since November 2001 are influenced by 2001's million-selling cartoon hip-hop group Gorillaz and *Music From Mali*, his collaboration with Malian musicians last year.

The groove-oriented tracks were recorded with the rest of Blur, bassist Alex James and drummer Dave Rowntree (plus superstar DJ Fatboy Slim, who appears on two tracks), over five weeks in Morocco last September. **ROB KEMP**



## WE TOLD YOU!

Blender-championed pretend lesbians shake the world!

T.A.T.U., THE RUSSIAN faux-lesbian teenage pop duo, have topped the British singles charts with "All the Things She Said" almost a year after *Blender* first tipped them for the top in our June/July 2002 issue. Their debut album, *200 KM/H in the Wrong Lane*, reached number 33 on the *Billboard* charts at press time. "Luckily, my daughter doesn't like them," says Yevgeniy Khorishko, a press officer for the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. **ROB KEMP**

## Word!



"We're all a little wacko sometimes, and if we think we're not, maybe we are more than we know."  
**MARIAH CAREY**

## ALSO IN THE STUDIO



That guy Fendi is one lucky fella!

Terminally wasted all-country crooner **RYAN ADAMS** is in New Orleans recording his first proper "produced" album since 2001's *Gold*, set for a mid-to-late-year release. . . .

**DASHBOARD CONFESIONAL** are recording a follow-up to their million-selling 2001 breakthrough, *The Places You Have Come to Fear the Most*, at Bieler Bros. Studio in Florida. . . .

◀ **FOXY BROWN** is cutting *III Na Na II: The Fever*, the sequel to her hit 1996 debut, *III Na Na*, at P. Diddy's Daddy's House Studio with P. Diddy, Anita Baker, Noreaga, Ludacris and Outkast's Big Boi. . . .

**BASEMENT JAXX** are in their London studio recording the follow-up to 2001's *Rooty*, which included the clubland-cum-Pringles commercial hit "Where's Your Head At." No release date has been set. . . .

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MATT  
GREENING

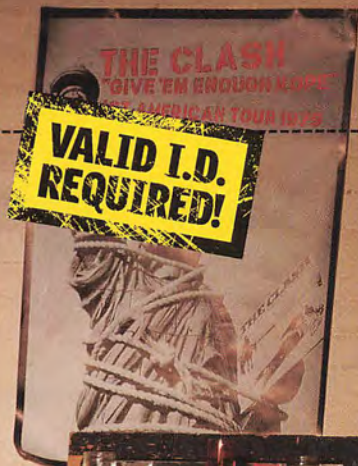
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THE SIMPSONS SUNDAYS ON FOX

# Useful Tips From the Stars!



American Hi-Fi, from left: Jamie Arentzen, Brian Nolan, Drew Parsons, Stacy Jones

AMERICAN HI-FI'S NEW ALBUM **THE ART OF LOSING** (ISLAND) IS OUT NOW.

HOW TO ...

## THROW THE PERFECT KEG PARTY

# WITH American Hi-Fi

In their new video for "The Art of Losing," the Boston pop-punk quartet American Hi-Fi take over a suburban home and throw a kick-ass keg party. Here, they demonstrate how to host the perfect beery bacchanal: chicks, fights — and the all-important keg stand. Dude!

BY ROB KEMP  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL LAVINE

### 1 GET IT!

**Singer-guitarist Stacy Jones:** "You need a keg, a beer bong and a lot of plastic cups — no Styrofoam! Onstage we'll ask, 'Who's having a fuckin' party tonight?' Some fans will take us to a house we can trash. It's good to be able to have one keg inside and a keg on a porch or patio, so you can go outside for a while — and maybe have some wine coolers for the girls."

### 2 SET IT!

**Guitarist Jamie Arentzen:** "You also need some cute coeds around. You can have a keg party without 'em, but they're never as fun. There's also no way to keep big, beefy guys away when there's beer involved — they can track that shit like a bloodhound. The upside is that they'll fight — there's nothing wrong with a fight. Besides, they end up hugging and drinking together."

### 3 TAP IT!

**Drummer Brian Nolan:** "Don't try to tap the keg if you've never done it before — there's nothing worse than the guy who taps wrong, and then there's foam all over the place. Also, don't barf in the living room. Please try to make it to the bathroom. I've been in situations where everyone was screaming out my name to puke — and I did ... all over the rug!"

### 4 STAND IT!

**Bassist Drew Parsons:** "The keg stand is a rite of passage. I went to a party at this girl's house where some guy did one for about four seconds, and the girl did one for about 30 seconds. She really showed him up. Real party girls don't care if their bra shows, and gender doesn't matter. As long as you open your throat up and keep taking it down, you're good. So to speak."



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Wednesday, March 12th  
Halfpipe Pre-Qualifiers

Thursday, March 13th  
Slopestyle Qualifiers

Friday, March 14th  
Halfpipe Qualifiers  
Rail Jam Finals

Friday, March 14th  
Halfpipe Quarterfinals

Saturday, March 15th  
Halfpipe Semifinals  
Halfpipe Finals

Sunday, March 16th  
Junior Halfpipe Qualifiers  
Junior Halfpipe Finals  
Slopestyle Finals



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Rob Garza: "One of my all-time favorites. When Cooke sings, you believe this experience has happened. It rings true through his voice and feels very personal. There'll never be anyone else who sounds like him."



**BOB MARLEY CATCH A FIRE**  
Eric Hilton: "Reggae is powerful music. And this is particularly good, not so poppy. It's got 'Slave Driver,' '400 Years' and a lot of these protest songs I'm into. Marley was badass from the beginning."



**MILES DAVIS SKETCHES OF SPAIN**  
Garza: "Miles called flamenco 'the blues of Europe,' and the sounds on this make you feel like you're in Spain. The interesting points in music are where cultures come into contact."



**RUDY RAY MOORE AND THE SOUL REBELLION ORCHESTRA DOLEMITE: ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK**  
Hilton: "I really like blaxploitation soundtracks. Aren't the Beastie Boys into Dolemite?" *BEN KAPLAN*

→ THIEVERY CORPORATION'S NEW ALBUM IS *THE RICHEST MAN IN BABYLON (ESL)*

News Roundup!

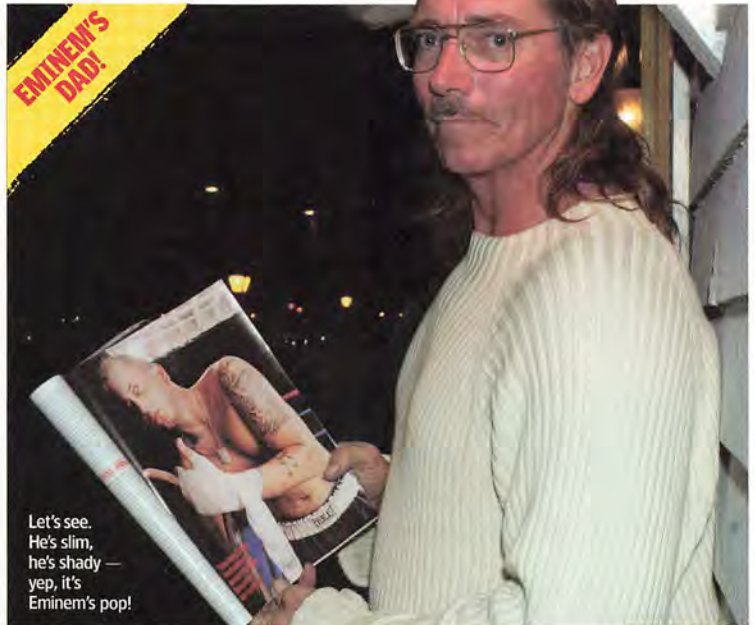
**SIR ELTON JOHN**, who called **MADONNA**'s "Die Another Day" "the worst Bond theme ever," says the chanteuse canceled her planned performance of the song at the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's Golden Globe Awards ceremony after discovering he would attend.

Former Backstreet Boy **A.J. McLEAN** canceled his Valentine's Day wedding to singer **SARAH MARTIN**. They "need some additional time to strengthen their relationship," a representative said.

Manhattan-based hip-hop concern **Violator Management** — home to **BUSTA RHYMES**, **MISSY ELLIOTT** and **MOBB DEEP** — was recently raked by ammunition. No one was wounded, and the gunmen escaped.

**PHIL COLLINS** will be inducted into the **Songwriters Hall of Fame** in **New York** on **June 12**.

Word!



Let's see. He's slim, he's shady — yep, it's Eminem's pop!

"Who's Your Daddy?"

If you're Eminem, it's this guy: Marshall Bruce Mathers III!

★ **EMINEM'S ESTRANGED** father, Marshall Bruce Mathers II, has made a fresh attempt to contact his son despite the rapper telling a TV interviewer, "I don't want to know my father, see him or talk to him."

"As long as I'm still alive and kicking, I'll keep knocking on the door to see if I get any answers," the 51-year-old Indiana steelworker told the British press. "I'm certain that one day it'll happen."

Mathers, who first made a public appeal to Eminem two years ago, hasn't seen his son since 1973, when his wife

Debbie left and took their seven-month-old boy with her. He protested that he had to watch *8 Mile* in order to learn about his son's childhood.

Mathers also revealed extracts from a journal he kept in which he recorded his son's first months. Apparently, the infant Marshall's favorite song was "The Ugly Duckling," and he was fond of cherry vanilla pudding. Despite Eminem's refusal to see his father, Mathers is optimistic. "I'm hoping he's putting this image out to sell records," he said. *DORIAN LYNKEY*



★ Weird Band Alert!

**EMOCAPELLA**

What's this? A 13-piece choir doing emo hits? *Jeez.*



**OK, SO IT'S EMO — SING A CAPPELLA-STYLE?**

Yep. This crack troupe of 13 (or so) Washington, D.C., college kids harmonize the music of such artists as Jimmy Eat World and Dashboard Confessional.

**LIKE, WHERE?**

They set up without warning, impromptu-style, in public student areas and let rip with the vocal cords for the benefit of their classmates and drunken bystanders. Apparently, it can get pretty emotional.

**HOW SO?**

Well, one visitor to the group's Web site ([gwu.edu/~emocap](http://gwu.edu/~emocap)) was "seriously considering flying over there just to kick your bitch asses." *STEVE LOWE*



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Just for a change, Eminem raises three fingers!

## “WE’LL SEPARATE THE MEN FROM THE BOYS!”

**Eminem announces big gig; Metallica and Limp Bizkit bury the hatchet to tour together**

INSTEAD OF TOURING this summer, Eminem has announced he will stage a huge, star-studded concert in his hometown of Detroit with the help of Missy Elliott and 50 Cent. The show will take place at Detroit’s Ford Field on Saturday, July 12.

Metallica, Limp Bizkit, Linkin Park, Mudvayne and Deftones, meanwhile, will join forces for 2003’s ultimate metal extravaganza. The Summer Sanitarium Tour, named for Metallica’s 1986 opus “Welcome Home (Sanitarium),” will launch July 4 and run through August.

“I think this is a tour that separates the men from the boys,” growled Bizkit frontman Fred Durst.

The tour represents a truce between Durst and Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich.

In 1999, Ulrich told a Metallica fan magazine he felt a “tremendous amount of hatred toward Limp Bizkit. All I have to think of is Fred Durst’s red baseball cap, and I get very hostile.”

At the recent tour press conference, Ulrich said, “We settled [the dispute] a long-  
 ass time ago. I have a lot of respect for where Fred was coming from.” **ROB KEMP**



I ♥ Lars!

**“All I have to think of is Fred Durst’s red baseball cap, and I get very hostile.”**



## Obits

**JIM McREYNOLDS**  
 75, December 31, in Gallatin, Tennessee, of thyroid cancer. Half of brother act Jim and Jesse, one of bluegrass music’s top duos with such hits as “Cotton Mill Man,” “Are You Missing Me?” and “Paradise.” The guitar-and-mandolin combo became members of the Grand Ole Opry in 1964.

**KEVIN MacMICHAEL**  
 51, December 31, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, of cancer. Guitarist for quintessential ’80s one-hit-wonder Cutting Crew, the English group remembered for the 1987 chart-topper “(I Just Died) In Your Arms.”

**MICKEY FINN**  
 56, January 11, in London, reportedly of kidney and liver complications. Percussionist in glam-rock band T. Rex from 1969 to 1975. In the late ’90s, Finn played with a reconfigured T. Rex, whose leader, Marc Bolan, died in 1977.

**EMILY “HONEY” HO**  
 90, January 14, in Kailua, Hawaii, of natural causes. Mother of Hawaiian superstar Don Ho and grandmother of kiddie-pop singer Hoku. Ran a nightclub bearing her nickname, where Don Ho got his start in showbiz.

**NELL CARTER**  
 54, January 23, in Beverly Hills, of natural causes. Singer and actress who rose to fame on Broadway before starring as the sassy housekeeper in the sitcom *Gimme a Break*. Performed as a gospel singer early in her career.



Maurice Gibb in 1978

# Maurice Gibb 1949–2003

**The 53-year-old former Bee Gee died of intestinal complications in Miami on January 12**

★ THE BEE GEES — Anglo-Australian brothers Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb — were the ’50s boy band that grew up to tug the heartstrings of girls bypassed by the ’60s rock revolution, and who then defied a career slump by

reemerging as blue-eyed soul men. Their breathy three-part harmonies were the trademark sound of 1977’s pop and movie phenomenon *Saturday Night Fever*.

The dawn-of-disco hits “Jive Talkin’,” “Night Fever” and “Stayin’ Alive” were the peak of the Bee Gees’ nearly 50-year career. They racked up 110 million record sales worldwide and nine number 1 hits.

An exceptional musician and producer but a man not over-endowed with striking looks or star charisma, Maurice suffered from alcoholism, which wrecked his first marriage — to the singer Lulu — and his health, particularly after the 1988 deaths of both his father and his younger brother Andy.

Gibb is survived by his second wife, Yvonne, and their children, Adam and Samantha. **MAT SNOW**



From left: Robin, Barry and Maurice Gibb

### MAURICE GIBB His greatest CDs



**BEST OF BEE GEES**  
 POLYDOR, 1969



Enraptured by the Beatles’ non-rocking inventions, the Bee Gees filled these odd late-’60s songs with baroque melodies and surreal imagery.



**MAIN COURSE**  
 POLYDOR, 1975



The Gibbs were has-beens when they went to Miami and found disco. “Nights On Broadway” hinted at the world conquest to come.



**SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER**  
 POLYDOR, 1977



Iconic, gorgeous, divisive, historic: The soundtrack sold 30 million copies and made disco all but inescapable.



**SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN**  
 POLYDOR, 1979



Not disco, but not *not* disco, the *Saturday Night Fever* follow-up was heavy on hit ballads and falsetto detail. **ROB TANNENBAUM**



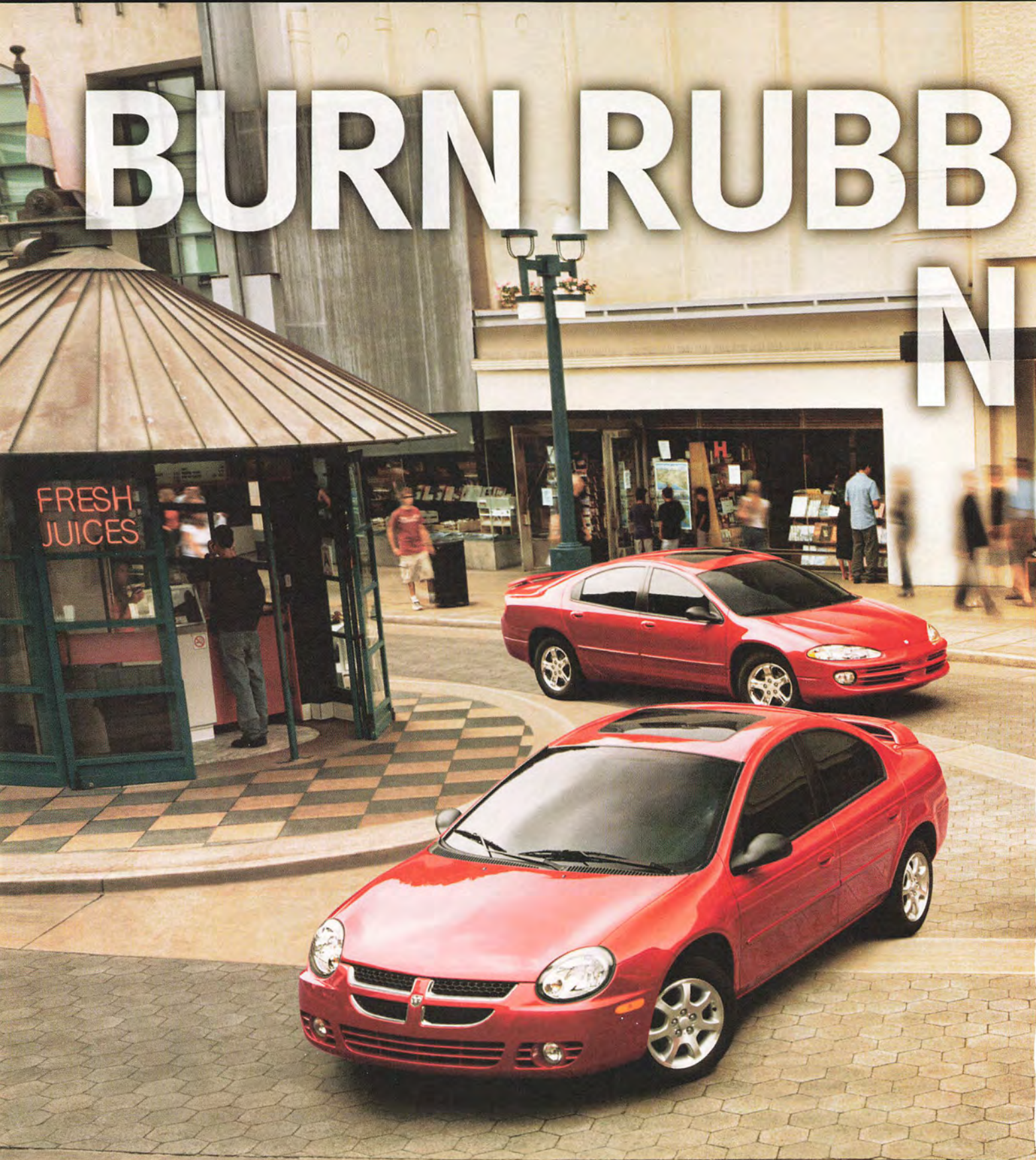


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Chuck D.: Hey, buddy! Wanna buy a clock?

**What's that squeaky whistling noise on "Rebel Without a Pause" by Public Enemy and all those other rap songs? I've wondered for 15 years!**

KYLE COOPER, YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

When Public Enemy released "Rebel" in 1987, producer Bill Stephney claimed the piercing shriek that runs through it was sampled from a teapot whistling on his stove one morning. Actually, it's a tenor sax played by Robert McCullough on the intro to "The Grunt," a 1970 song by James Brown's backing band, Fred Wesley and the JBs. The Bomb Squad, Public Enemy's production team, liked the sound so much that they recycled it for "Night of the Living Baseheads" and several other tracks.

**Sometimes you see it, sometimes you don't: Is Mariah Carey's mole real?**

CESAR ALDAZ, EL PASO, TEXAS

Yup, it's real. But over the years, the mark on the left side of her chin has often been angled, concealed, or Photoshopped out of the picture. On the cover of Carey's 1990 debut, *Mariah Carey*, she has the mark; on the cover of 1991's *Emotions*, she doesn't.

The beauty mark is hardly unsightly, but for years, Carey was photographed only with it concealed by makeup — or with her head angled from the right. Over time, she's apparently learned to stop worrying and love the mole.

**What did the MG stand for in Booker T. and the MG's?**

TIM REINHART, STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN

Conventional wisdom holds that Stax Records' house band, based in Memphis, was known by the initials for Memphis Group. But their sometime producer Chips Moman countered that he originally named the band the Triumphs after his Triumph TR3 sports car. After Moman left Stax, the group changed its name but kept its vehicular theme by commemorating another British sports car: the MG.

**Did Jimi Hendrix and Mitch Mitchell almost join Keith Emerson and Greg Lake before they formed ELP? Might there have been a good progressive-rock group?**

KRIS DIMARTINO  
BEL AIR, MARYLAND

Weirdly enough, a joint venture between guitar god and prog-rock monsters nearly



Donna Summer: Huge in pre-Biblical Sumeria.

**Do any songs use real sex sounds?**

JOCELYN ARMOS, SAN DIEGO

Oh, yes . . . *ohhh, yesssss!* Most aural sex in pop involves Meg Ryan-style simulation — witness 2 Live Crew's nutty 1989 "Me So Horny" — but two steamy songs came close (so to speak) to the real thing. In 1975, Donna Summer moaned through her sultry disco smash "Love to Love You Baby" (timed at 17 minutes, legend has it, to mirror her label chief's bedroom stamina). And Jane Birkin

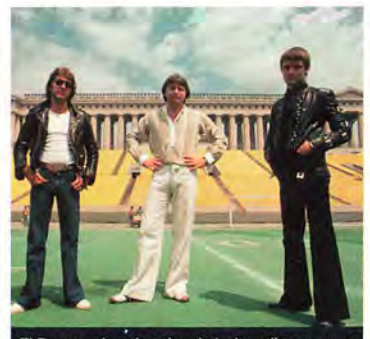
gaped through Serge Gainsbourg's scandalous 1969 single "Je T'Aime . . . Moi Non Plus" ("I Love You . . . Me Neither").

Both Summer and Birkin insisted their performances were acting jobs. But Gainsbourg first recorded "Je T'Aime" in 1967 with then-girlfriend Brigitte Bardot; the two squashed together in a small glass booth in the studio and got their freak on for real. But theirs was a delayed climax: Bardot's "Je T'Aime" wasn't released until 1986.

happened. In 1970, Emerson and Lake approached Mitchell, former drummer with the Jimi Hendrix Experience, about joining their band. Mitchell recommended that the pair also invite his old bandleader (and Emerson's friend) Hendrix, who wanted to try out the lineup.

"Even after Mitch was long out of the picture and we had already settled on Carl [Palmer], talk about working with Jimi continued," Emerson later said of the proposal. The quartet planned to jam in autumn 1970, but the Fates intervened, as they

often do. Hendrix died in mid-September — thus depriving prog-rock nerds the world over of an album by a supergroup called HELP. [BLENDER]



ELP remember that the gig isn't until tomorrow.



The MG's gardening show was not a ratings success.

## YOUR QUESTIONS >>

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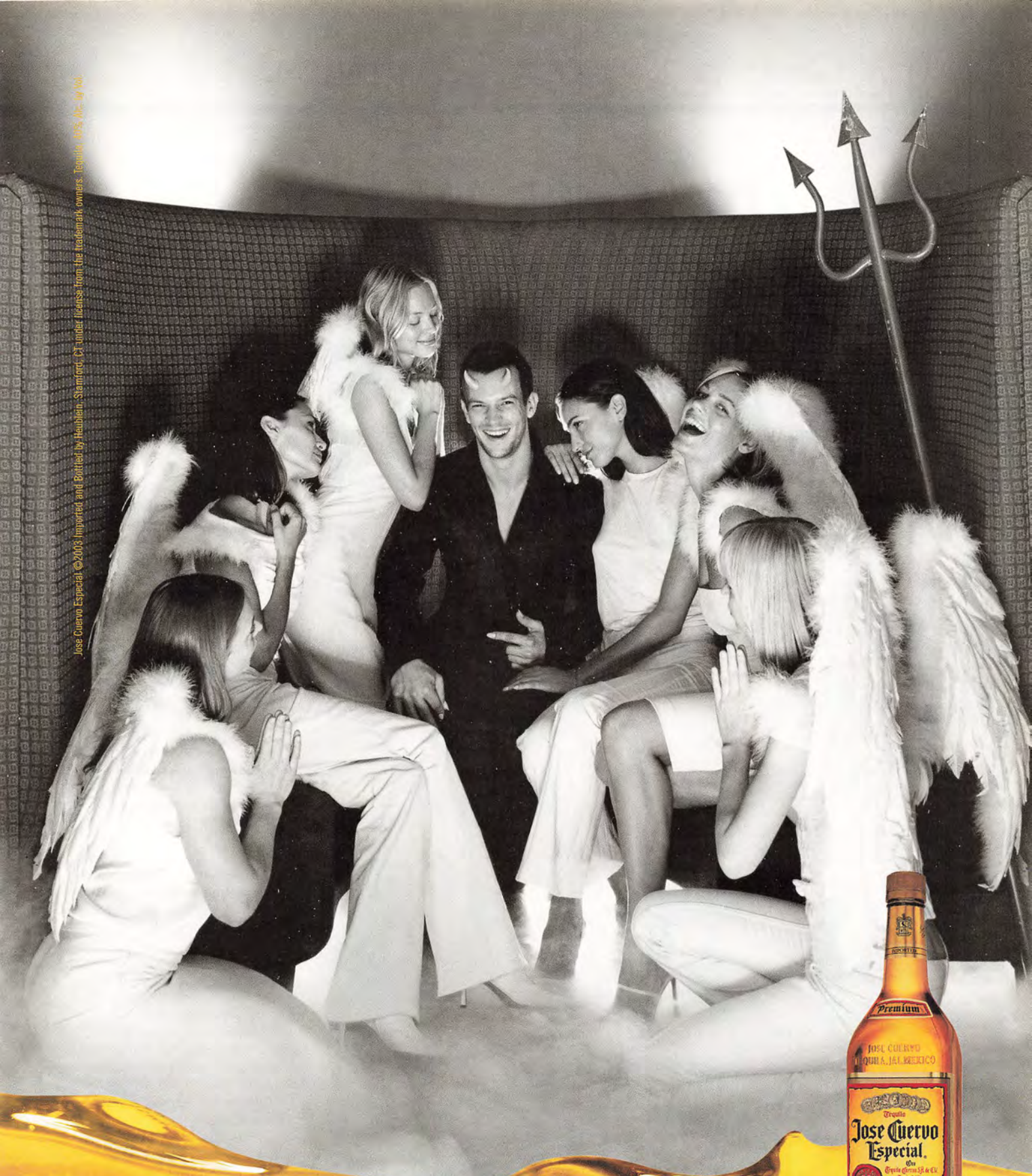
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Some people sleepwalk. Jimi sleep-guitaried.

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BLENDER EXPLORES THE FINEST TUNES IN HISTORY

## Killing Me Softly With His Song

The Fugees, strumming their pain with their fingers. From left: Pras Michel, Lauryn Hill and Wyclef Jean



> “‘Killing Me Softly’ is about soul.” LAURYN HILL

“One time! Two times!” rapped **the Fugees**, and how right they were! For this Don McLean-inspired weepie had already passed through two artists before the Fugees — and, later, Hugh Grant — got their hands on it!

**★** “KILLING ME SOFTLY With His Song” might be pop’s most misunderstood tune of all time. It’s surrounded by so many myths, it makes Aesop’s fables look like reality TV. Millions of pop fans know that Roberta Flack wrote the song about Don McLean — killing her softly with his song “American Pie” — and that the Fugees made it a smash more than 20 years later.

Interesting, but not true. Yes, Flack took this classic lovelorn weepie to number 1 in February 1973. But she didn’t write it.

“When Roberta’s version came out,” McLean recalls, “somebody called me and said, ‘Do you know there’s a song about you that’s number 1?’ I said, ‘What — are you kidding?’ And they said, ‘The girl who originally recorded it had it written for her after she saw you at the Troubadour in Los Angeles. She went on TV and talked about it.’”

The girl was an L.A. folkie named Lori Lieberman. “I thought [McLean] was just incredible,” she says. “He was singing songs that I felt pertained to my life.” But it wasn’t “American Pie” that got her scribbling — it was a lesser-known album track called “Empty Chairs.”

“I was going through some difficult things at the time, and what he was singing about made me think, ‘Whoa! This person knows me! How could he know me so well?’” Lieberman says. “I went home and wrote a poem and showed it to the two men I was working with at the time”: songwriters Norman Gimbel and Charles Fox, who decided her heartfelt words weren’t lyrics yet.





"Dude, I'm not layin' down one more beat 'til that beef fo mein gets here."

"Never having written a song," she says, "I didn't know how to put my poem into lyric form. Norman was able to do that. The finished lyrics are Norman's, but he was very careful to make sure that all of the feelings were coming from me." His biggest change was her title, originally "Killing Me Softly With His Blues."

Although Lieberman's recording didn't set the world on fire, it did become a track on TWA's in-flight entertainment set, and that's where fate stepped in. "I was flying from Los Angeles to New York," Roberta Flack has said. "Looking at the in-flight magazine, I saw the picture of this little girl, Lori Lieberman, and the title of the song. Before I heard the song, I thought it had an awfully good title, and when I heard it, I loved it. By the time I got to New York I knew I had to do that song, and I knew I'd be able to add something to it."

Quincy Jones, Flack's producer, contacted Gimbel and Fox and began transforming the song. "My classical background made it possible for me to try a number of things

with it," Flack has said. "I changed parts of the chord structure and chose to end on a major chord. It wasn't written that way."

Her revised arrangement rocketed to number 1 in 1973 and earned a Grammy double-whammy: Record of the Year and Best Pop Vocal.

More than two decades later, the song was still in regular radio rotation, and a New Jersey rap trio was hitting the charts with its 1994 debut album, *Blunted on Reality*.

"My mom was a Roberta Flack fan, so I grew up with her music," Fugees vocalist Lauryn Hill said at the time. "One day, me and [Fugee] Pras [Michel] were in the car. The song came on the radio, and we both decided that song was it. One of our goals is to reunite the youths with musicality. It's about soul."

The Fugees had to jump through hoops to get permission to record it. Like Gimbel, Fox and Flack before them, they had a couple of changes they wanted to make. They had rewritten the lyric to become an antidrug, antipoverty theme called "Killing Him Softly,"

but Gimbel and Fox refused to play ball, forcing the Fugees to stamp their identity on its sound and not on its lyrics.

The Fugees recorded the song cheaply, in band member Wyclef Jean's rudimentary home studio, the Booga Basement, and the song hit the streets on March 9, 1996, as a track on the Fugees' second album, *The Score*. By May 5, "Killing Me Softly" had become a runaway smash, leaping up the rap airplay chart before exploding onto mainstream radio.

Among the song's millions of fans was a certain Welshman-about-Vegas. "I loved what Wyclef did with the Fugees, especially 'Killing Me Softly,'" Tom Jones said at the time. "He stripped it down and turned it into something different from the original."

The Fugees' smartest move, though, wasn't musical but commercial: They decided not to release the song as a single, forcing fans to buy their entire album. The song helped *The Score* go multiplatinum and garnered both the Best R&B Performance by a Group and Rap Album of the Year Grammys for the Fugees in 1997.

"Killing Me Softly" also enjoyed a brief jolt in last year's movie *About a Boy*, in which young British actor Nicholas Hoult warbles it — a cappella — before hundreds of jeering schoolmates. Things are looking pretty grim until Hugh Grant materializes with a guitar to salvage a shred of their dignity.

Hoult and Grant's interpretation, needless to say, didn't chart. But Roberta Flack's and the Fugees' versions have racked up an astonishing 5 million performances, propelling "Killing Me Softly" to number 11 in the BMI list of the Top 100 songs of all time. Not bad for one night's work at the Troubadour. **JOHNNY BLACK**

### VITAL STATISTICS

**SONG**  
"Killing Me Softly With His Song"

**ARTIST**  
The Fugees

**LABEL**  
Ruffhouse/  
Columbia

**PERFORMERS**  
Lauryn Hill  
vocals  
Wyclef Jean  
raps/guitar  
Pras Michel  
raps

**PRODUCERS**  
Wyclef Jean,  
Lauryn Hill,  
Pras Michel and  
Jerry Duplessis

**THE SCORE'S  
HIGHEST CHART  
POSITION**  
2



### WHO'S WHO >>>



**WYCLEF JEAN**  
Haitian guitarist-producer who founded the Fugees with Pras Michel and Lauryn Hill. Later found solo success as a producer.



**LAURYN HILL**  
New Jersey-born actress-turned-politically motivated singer, first as a Fugee and then with her 1998 album, *The Miseducation Of...*



**DON MCLEAN**  
Folkie who is best known for smash hits "American Pie" and "Vincent." Still records and performs throughout the world.



**ROBERTA FLACK**  
Multiple Grammy-winning vocalist of MOR standards "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and "Tonight, I Celebrate My Love."



"It's Hugh Grant! With a guitar! Somebody stop him!"



YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

## Angus Young

The AC/DC guitarist on Nazis, sexually transmitted diseases and being a teetotaler. And no, he's not going to stop wearing the uniform

BY CAMERON ADAMS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY INGVAR KENNE

★“WE’RE NOT ONE of those bands that are into the whole celebrity-golf-tournament thing,” says Angus Young with a frown, pacing around a well-worn recording studio in Sydney, Australia. “It’s a bit Hollywood for me.”

The diminutive 48-year-old guitar hero is slyly referring to his band’s imminent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

“‘Hall of Shame,’” he snorts. “Rock stars in tuxedos? Fuck that.”

That Young should thumb his nose at such glitz is not surprising. Throughout AC/DC’s startlingly successful 30-year career, the band has not once deviated from a no-frills approach that blends crunchy Chuck Berry rock & roll riffing with precious little else.

It’s a tactic that has paid off. Despite the 1980 booze-related death of their first singer, Bon Scott, they’ve sold more than 80 million records worldwide. Now, with a slew of retooled old albums about to be reissued — including the 1980 classic *Back in Black* — Young is in a loquacious mood: “I’ve had a few weeks off here in Sydney, so I’m feeling good!”

With a cup of tea (his strongest tippie) by his side and a pack of Benson & Hedges at the ready, he steels himself to confront the readers’ inquiries.

“I’m not sure I’m ready for this,” he says with a sigh. “Oh, well, off we go. . . .”



Angus Young: Dignity!  
Always dignity!

How have AC/DC groupies changed over your 30-year career?

HANDS\_OFF, ETOBICOKE, ONTARIO

[Young’s brother and bandmate] Malcolm says it used to be “Lock up your daughters!” and now it’s “Lock up your mothers!” Maybe that’s an indication. Sometimes you’ll come offstage and hear, “There’s a girl who wants to see you and she hasn’t got a stitch on,” but I’m always the last to see these kinds of things. Bon was a magnet for everything, from girls who were walking the streets to mothers and daughters — everyone wanted a piece of him. He was the ultimate goal for many women. You’d even get guys who’d say to him, “Here, Bon, take my wife for the night, as long as I can know about it the next day.”

What was the last dirty deed you did?

MORNINGBELL, MONTPELIER, VERMONT

I shouldn’t say. Protect the innocent.

I’m in an up-and-coming hip-hop group, and we’d like to sample the guitar riff from “You Shook Me All Night Long.” Give me a ballpark figure of how much that will cost me.

GUIDEDBYCHOICES, CHICAGO

We’ve had people take a whole slab of one of our songs and say it’s their own. You might spend years working on a tune, and then some guy comes in and takes the hook out of it and goes, “Hey, look what I wrote.” I just think, “If you’re so talented, why aren’t you writing your own song?” Do we need the money? Well, I wouldn’t say I’m Bill Gates, but we’ve made a chunk of change.

Do you have any children, and do they play with the Angus Young doll (made by designer Todd McFarlane)?

BBCEAVEN, ARDMORE, PENNSYLVANIA

I’ve got no kids. Malcolm’s got a couple, but I don’t know if they’ve got that doll. That’s the last thing I’d want to see a kid playing with! There’s been some strange merchandise over the years. Some porno →



Are you the single shortest man in rock & roll?

DANIEL 1978, HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA

I really don’t know. I’ve seen some guys in lifts who are pretty short. Height’s never bothered me. What’s my official height? About five-foot-two. On a good day.

Have you ever asked a girl to put on the schoolboy uniform before you took her to bed? Or has a woman ever asked if she could try it on?

JASON\_AMY\_PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA

I’ve had all sorts of strange offers. You could say the uniform works! I don’t know why. Maybe when I was young and I was wearing the uniform I looked cute to girls — I’m not really sure.

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"I've had all sorts of strange offers.  
You could say the uniform works!"



## ANGUS YOUNG

mag had a Bon Scott sex aid. I don't know if he invented it, but he'd been ranting and raving about it.

I read that your song "Night of the Long Knives" is a reference to a historic Nazi event. Are you a history buff? What period is your specialty?

MARVINGARDENS, COVINGTON, KENTUCKY

It wasn't a Nazi thing. It was a piss-take on the celebrity world, how they hug and put the knives in one another's backs. I like a lot of early Egyptian history, the pyramids. They were survivors. And I like watching some of the Roman battles. What was that movie? *Gladiator*. Sometimes it inspires you musically.

Is it true that the band wrote "The Jack" when you all were suffering a nasty bout of venereal disease?

GOBULLDOGS, POTOMAC, MARYLAND

Bon had the tale about it — some girl was trying to give him a doctor's bill. He always thought social diseases would be a good topic to write about, and that "The Jack" would be a good title for a song. That was Bon's character.

What did you think of Céline Dion and Anastacia's version of "You Shook Me All Night Long" on *VH1 Divas* recently?

JULIE, DIANE, COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

I haven't heard it. They probably do it better than us. The best AC/DC cover I've heard? There was an all-girl cover band in America, Hell's Belles. I've had people say to me, "How come you ripped off that band's song 'Highway to Hell'?" Geez, I'm sorry. How dare we!

Who designed AC/DC's classic logo?

PYRO4LIFE, TEMPE, ARIZONA

Someone from England. We saw the album cover it was on, and everyone liked it. I've seen the logo tattooed on a lot of people. It's weird when people show you your face tattooed on them. I signed one girl's leg, and I wrote it big. Then she came back a few days later, and she'd had it tattooed over. From then on, I've made my signatures really small so it won't take so long to get tattooed and won't hurt so much. Some people want "Highway to Hell" playing at their funeral. Do I? Nah. Just put me

**"I heard Nirvana only after the guy died."**



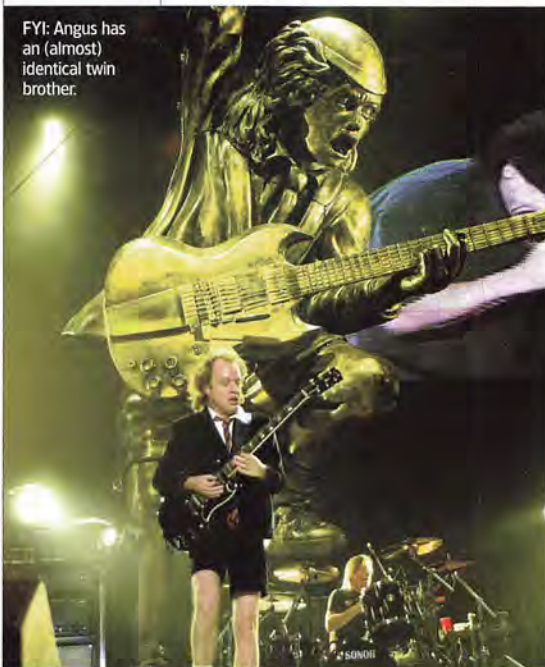
Never ask Angus Young for directions.



King Tut: Gnostic



Céline Dion: Satanic



FYI: Angus has an (almost) identical twin brother.

in a big trash can; that'll do me fine.

I know that Arnold Schwarzenegger is a fan of yours. Have you ever partied with Arnie?

4THOSEABOUT2ROCK, TUSTIN, CALIFORNIA

I spent a good couple of hours teaching him how to do the duck walk. He's a big guy — I wasn't going to tell him he couldn't do it. But he'd practiced it; he had it down pat. By Hollywood standards, he was nice. He used to be a bodybuilder — he picked me up.

Do you do or eat anything special to stay healthy?

DWARFBEAT, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

I don't jog or anything. I get on a stage and play guitar. That keeps me moving. If you said,

"Angus, go and lift some boxes," I couldn't do it. I smoke a lot. On a shit day I smoke all day. It's a bad habit.

What's the worst band-related argument you and Malcolm ever had?

MISTERP-NUT, BOULDER, COLORADO

The only time I remember the two of us scrapping was when I didn't want to do a radio interview back in the '70s. They wanted me to show up with the school uniform on, but it was radio — no one would see it anyway. But Malcolm wanted me to do it. When I walked in, the guy said, "What are you wearing that stupid uniform for?" He was a right prick. Malcolm tipped his desk over and took back our records, which this guy had just been given to play. Malcolm said, "You're not having these," and left with them.



Arnie: Babe magnet

Every time I walk into a strip club, some girl is dancing to an AC/DC song. Do you have the same experience?

BIGBALLZ, MILFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

I never frequent those places! Over the years I'd meet strippers who use our songs for their routines. I remember a radio guy in

L.A. had a show

where people would ring up while they were humping and request a track to hump to. He told us it was always an AC/DC track.

What's it like having a gigantic bronze statue of yourself onstage?

10\_ESSEEWALTZ, NASHVILLE

Kind of weird. Malcolm wanted to do it for years, and I thought, "Why not?" Normally I'm about this big [pinches thumb and forefinger together] onstage; there's not much of me. [The statue is] in storage now. Someone told me they wanted to rent it for some reason. As long as it's nothing pornographic. It could go on tour by itself. Both the bell and the cannon have.

Have you heard the Australian band the Vines? What do you think of 'em?

SKSERBUM1, MOAB, UTAH

The who? Divines? Are they new? Never heard of them. You know, I heard Nirvana only after the guy

Clockwise from top left: courtesy of McEfraine Toys; Inger-Kerens; PHARbox; Kevin Mazar; iReimage.com; Chris Capstick/Rev; Annalena D'Santo/WireImage.com; Digital Vision/Getty Images

died: some song, something about spirit. Did I like it? I could see something in it. I stopped listening to music when I started making music. I still like old rock & roll. Often I'll hear something I think sounds all right, and I'll get told it's 20 years old. Shows how hip I am.

**What did you teach the guy who paid \$28,000 for a guitar lesson from you?**  
50000ELVIS, CAMDEN, MAINE

I think he taught *me* a few things! He could play a lot of the tracks. He knew "Whole Lotta Rosie," "Let There Be Rock," "Dog Eat Dog," "Back in Black," "Hells Bells," "Highway to Hell." All the band was there playing with him. Then they let him play my part, and I got to watch AC/DC. And boo them. The money went to a children's music charity.

**What's your favorite memory of Bon Scott?**  
PROFESSORPLUM, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

I've got a lot of favorite memories of Bon. I'd love when we were on a plane and you'd hear this laugh that sounded like the devil waking up. Then you'd hear him say "triple bourbon." That always stuck in my head. He was very funny. I'd always ask him not to say something too funny or clever onstage because I'd start laughing and lose it.

**Did you ever try to get Bon to stop drinking so much?**  
2MUCH2YOUNG, SAN FRANCISCO

Bon wasn't a chronic kind of guy — he wasn't what you'd call an alcoholic. He just liked a good time. When he had a good time he had a *good* time. He could liven up a day. Every time you went out with him, you never knew where you'd end up.

**What's it like being a teetotaler in a band full of such boozers?**  
CHUCKIET, SMYRNA, GEORGIA

I'm a cheap drunk. Bon would say, "Don't let him smell the cork." And, "We've got to drink to come down to Angus's level." I always had fun anyway. The guys in the band are cool with it. Sometimes you just have to giggle along with them.

**You dress as a schoolboy, you often drop your drawers onstage and your band's name is a euphemism for bisexuality. Are you sure you're not gay?**  
HARVEY144, CLEVELAND

[Bristling] Am I sure? You'd have to ask my wife. I'm pretty sure I'm not.



"Whaddya mean, this is 'a bit phallic'?"



Killer Richard Ramirez

**Will you ever reach the point when you'll think, "I'm too old to wear that school uniform tonight"?**

MARSHAMARSHAMARSHA, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

I hope not. You wouldn't want to look like a fool. It's a hard thing to judge. I never saw Elvis Presley, but I'd have liked to have seen him in the '50s, instead of all that Vegas Christmas-light-show shit. With my uniform, I don't have to worry about looking pretty or what to wear or keeping up with trends.

**AC/DC have often been charged with writing misogynist songs, notably "Night Prowler," whose lyrics inspired serial killer Richard Ramirez. Do you ever look back with any regret?**  
DRMARTINZ, AUSTIN, TEXAS

*Misogynist.* That's a big word. What does it mean? "Women hater"? Nah. I don't regret the lyrics. A book on

**"Misogynist? Nah. I don't regret the lyrics. No subject is taboo."**



Bon Scott: "It's medicinal!"



Angus answers his critics.

murder doesn't make the guy who wrote the book a murderer. No subject is taboo. I remember this videomaker asked me one time, "Why is it when I make a video with girls in it, the bastards call it dirty, but when some French guy does it, it's frigg'in' art?"

**What's the worst gig you ever played?**  
DRAMAQUEEN, NEW YORK

The night in Salt Lake City in 1991, when three fans were crushed at a show and died. That was awful.

**What's your most bling-bling rock-star indulgence?**  
SPEEDKILLS, CARMEL, INDIANA

Bling-what? I'm not a material person. I've never been into cars or status or any of the things you have to have. The first thing I ever bought when I had money was a record player, which was a big deal at the time. I don't have any great indulgences. I've got a few houses, yeah, but if it all went away it wouldn't matter. I've got a lot of guitars too, but at the end of the day, I play only one at a time.

**As a Pete Townshend fan, what do you make of his recent troubles?**  
FREAKYSTYLEY, RENO, NEVADA

I can't talk for him, really. I don't want to throw my two cents in, because they'll probably come get me: "Hey, that guy's in a school uniform. Perfect!"

**My friends and I are coming to Sydney for a weeklong vacation. Where should we go for a good time?**  
TORTILLA\_MCGEE, BURNET, TEXAS

Once you get to Sydney, you'll be having a good time. Any pub would probably do fine. If you're looking for the girls, try the beach. That'll keep your eyes occupied. [BLENDER]

Party gonna happen at the union hall  
Shakin' to the rhythm 'til everybody fall  
Pickin' up my woman in my Chevrolet  
Glory hallelujah gonna rock the night away  
-AC/DC



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# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Classic Rock



## AC/DC Highway to Hell

ATCO, 1979

The album that firmly cemented AC/DC's trademark sound — grooving backbeats topped with heavy, play-in-a-day riffs — and original singer Bon Scott's nihilism. Six months after its release, the frontman would be found dead in a car in London following a booze bender. **Standout track:** "Highway to Hell"



## AC/DC Back in Black

ATCO, 1980

Angus Young and producer Mutt Lange made the band a household name with this pop-metal gem. Filling Bon Scott's shoes, ex-used-car salesman Brian Johnson sang of sex and alcoholic jollity behind the greatest bedroom riffs ever. **Standout track:** "You Shook Me All Night Long"



## RYAN ADAMS Heartbreaker

BLOODSHOT, 2000

Alt-country motor-mouth Adams surprised many with his first solo album after the demise of Whiskeytown. Where that group's records had been rough and rowdy, here was a relaxed, soothing beauty that melted hearts with its smoky, lovesick charms. **Standout track:** "Come Pick Me Up"



## AEROSMITH Toys in the Attic

COLUMBIA, 1975

Although they copped their share of Rolling Stones licks (not to mention Rolling Stones attitude), Aerosmith also had a jones for James Brown, and it was their sly sense of funk — particularly in "Walk This Way" and "Sweet Emotion" — that kept these Toys in play. **Standout track:** "Walk This Way"



## AEROSMITH Rocks

COLUMBIA, 1976

A tough, arrogant follow-up to *Toys in the Attic*, *Rocks* is a tasty, nasty set of fuck-me riffs and fuck-you swagger, combining Aerosmith's coarse blend of maximum R&B/blues metal and perfecting prototypical 1970s American hard rock in the process. **Standout track:** "Back in the Saddle"



## THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND Live at the Fillmore East

POLYDOR, 1971

An example of great musicians stretching out and simply flowing. Even though producer Tom Dowd skillfully edited some of the jams, we're still talking 10 minutes—plus on three tracks. **Standout track:** "Statesboro Blues"



## THE ANIMALS The Best of the Animals

ABKCO, 1968

Led by Eric Burdon and masterful organist Alan Price, the Animals leavened their R&B grit with English pop hooks. This compilation of pre-'66 hits captures their early peak, from British Invasion staples to the obligatory blues covers. **Standout track:** "We Gotta Get Out of This Place"



## THE BAND Music from Big Pink

CAPITOL, 1968

Their landmark debut: The oracular lyrics and the music's subdued desperation form a meditation on social turbulence, while their rootsy approach proved surprisingly visionary. Steeped in history and myth, the album's mystique hasn't diminished. **Standout track:** "The Weight"



## THE BAND The Band

CAPITOL, 1969

Like Italians reinventing the Western, these Canadians envisioned a hillbilly funk and melancholic grandeur that Americans hadn't recognized in themselves. Here, Robbie Robertson comes into his own, writing or cowriting every tune. **Standout track:** "Up On Cripple Creek"



## BEACH BOYS Little Deuce Coupe/All Summer Long

CAPITOL, 1960

Brian Wilson at his early peak (1963 and '64), before the demons took over. Embellishing the myth of good-time California, the Boys celebrate cars and surf with thrilling harmonies. An exhilarating mix of nerdiness and swagger. **Standout track:** "I Get Around"



## BEACH BOYS Today!/Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!)

CAPITOL, 1960

Following his 1964 breakdown, Brian Wilson fled the road to concentrate on studio work. This pairing of the band's two 1965 albums spotlights the more mature and complex music that resulted. **Standout track:** "Help Me, Rhonda"



The Allman Brothers: "You did tell the girls 8 o'clock, right?"



## BEACH BOYS Pet Sounds

CAPITOL, 1966

Ignoring '60s pop conventions, Brian Wilson turned the noises in his head into a musical universe. Heavenly arrangements punctuate an emotionally wrenching song cycle bursting with youthful hope, longing and doubt. This is why Brian Wilson is a genius. **Standout track:** "God Only Knows"



## CHUCK BERRY The Great Twenty-Eight

CHESS, 1962

Quintessential rock & roll, the trunk of rock's family tree. Berry's iconic guitar licks and his sly poetry provide ruminations on love, school and cars. This ideal introduction is packed with addictive music that bows to no one. **Standout track:** "Johnny B. Goode"



## BLACK SABBATH Symptom of the Universe: The Original Black Sabbath (1970-1978)

RHINO/WARNER BROS., 2002

Ozzy Osbourne's astonishing howl and Tony Iommi's sludge-filled riffs were the definition of metal and created some of the most dense, dark noise ever recorded. **Standout track:** "Paranoid"

## ARTISTS' PICKS: Mandy Moore

### → ELTON JOHN Madman Across the Water

ROCKET/ISLAND, 1971

"I love *Madman Across the Water*. Almost every song includes a mandolin!"





**BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD**  
Retrospective:  
The Best of Buffalo Springfield

ATCO, 1969

Neil Young, Stephen Stills and Richie Furay kept it together for two years and three albums, blue-printing the '70s L.A. sound. Always diverse, often brilliant. **Standout track:** "For What It's Worth"



**THE BYRDS**  
Greatest Hits (Expanded Edition)

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1999

Roger McGuinn and company invented folk-rock by making the music of Bob Dylan safe for mass consumption. But these West Coasters' true brilliance lay in their dirty-Beatles and space-pop originals. **Standout track:** "Eight Miles High"



**THE DOORS**  
The Very Best of The Doors

RHINO, 2001

Transcendental, pervy pop-rock, often imitated but rarely bettered. This double-disc compilation gathers the radio hits ("Hello, I Love You"), the lengthy wig-outs ("The End," "Riders On the Storm") and fan-friendly rarities. Best skip the organ solos, though. **Standout track:** "Break On Through"



**THE BYRDS**  
Sweetheart of the Rodeo

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1968

When David Crosby left the Byrds, Gram Parsons entered and transformed the folk-rock trail-blazers. In contrast to leader Jim "Roger" McGuinn's eclectic irony, Parsons displayed a deep feeling for old-fashioned roots music that still rings true today. **Standout track:** "Hickory Wind"



**TRACY CHAPMAN**  
Tracy Chapman

ELEKTRA, 1988

Chapman has yet to better this powerful and socially conscious debut. The rootsy arrangements are masterpieces of understatement, focusing attention on the sincerity of Chapman's world-worn voice and her confessional, storytelling lyrics. **Standout track:** "Fast Car"



**BOB DYLAN**  
Bringing It All Back Home

COLUMBIA, 1965

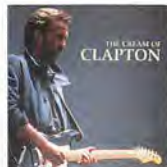
A year after the British Invasion had trained our attention on the other side of the Atlantic, Dylan brought it all back home with an album that electrified both folk music and the rock audience. Suddenly, the music's possibilities seemed endless. **Standout track:** "Subterranean Homesick Blues"



**CHEAP TRICK**  
Live at Budokan

EPIC, 1979

They previously underachieved everywhere except the far East, but this live set made these Midwestern ne'er-do-wells heroes at home. Full of distorted Beatles hooks in an arena of screaming teens — there's no finer distillation of pop charm and heavy-rock thrills. **Standout track:** "I Want You to Want Me"



**ERIC CLAPTON**  
The Cream of Clapton

POLYDOR/CHRONICLES, 1995

Honors both the chart-friendly, easier-listening, late-'70s Clapton and the whirling dervish of years earlier, scaling his creative peaks with Cream and keeping Jimi Hendrix from snapping at his heels. His vocals aren't bad either. **Standout track:** "Layla"



**ALICE COOPER**  
The Best of Alice Cooper: Mascara & Monsters

RHINO, 2001

In his pomp, the man formerly known as Vincent Furnier produced a fistful of classic, glam-tinged rock anthems. Twenty-two remasters of the Alice band's finest moments on one CD give you everything you need. **Standout track:** "Under My Wheels"



**CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL**  
Chronicle

FANTASY, 1976

Creedence suffused sturdy songwriting with socially conscious, visionary Americana. John Fogerty's plain-spoken lyrics were as indelible as his hooks, while the band's elemental swamp-rock swung mightily. **Standout track:** "Fortunate Son"



**BOB DYLAN**  
Highway 61 Revisited

COLUMBIA, 1965

Dylan flips the bird at the naysayers with his first (almost) entirely electric set. It featured the rant "Like a Rolling Stone" and the twisted mythology of the title track, remaining defiantly "plugged" until the acoustic 11-minute closer, "Desolation Row." **Standout track:** "Like a Rolling Stone"



**BOB DYLAN**  
Live 1966: The Royal Albert Hall Concert

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1998

Official release of the legendary bootleg. Its acoustic half finds Dylan hushed and stoned, while during the electric segment, his hardcore audience is effectively at war. The word compelling scarcely suffices. **Standout track:** "Ballad of a Thin Man"



**BOB DYLAN**  
Blonde on Blonde

COLUMBIA, 1966

An album that could confirm Dylan's genius on its own. Arrogant at times, Beatles-influenced, thoroughly in love with pop music, full of delicate instrumental detail and yet epic in scale. More evidence that 1966 was the best year of the last century. **Standout track:** "Just Like a Woman"



**BOB DYLAN**  
John Wesley Harding

COLUMBIA, 1967

John Wesley Harding goes for country over folk, despite using what are seemingly folk tales to couch its cryptic political allegory. The sound is straightforward, paving the way for country-rockers, but the words are knottier than ever. **Standout track:** "All Along the Watchtower"



Alice Cooper's Siamese twin did not survive the separation.

**THE BEST OF THE BEATLES**



**The Fab Four from start to finish (nearly)**

**Meet the Beatles**

CAPITOL, 1964

Not a truly new sound but a brilliant synthesis: R&B, '50s rock, sentimental pop and hillbilly harmonies, filled with irresistible verve. **Standout track:** "I Saw Her Standing There"

**A Hard Day's Night**

CAPITOL, 1964

The Fab's begin to hint at the sorrow beneath their jollity, leaving the hits with songs of hopeless romance ("And I Love Her") and personal regret ("Things We Said Today"). **Standout track:** "Can't Buy Me Love"

**Beatles for Sale**

CAPITOL, 1964

Released the same year as *A Hard Day's Night* to capitalize on the new phenomenon of Beatlemania, *hello, marijuana*. Bouncy covers augment eight bright-eyed originals. **Standout track:** "Eight Days a Week"

**Help!**

CAPITOL, 1965

A great soundtrack to a stupid film. *Help!* says goodbye, Beatlemania, hello, marijuana. **Standout track:** "Help!"

**Rubber Soul**

CAPITOL, 1965

The Beatles usher in the album age. Fourteen tracks of gleaming pop, liberally sprinkled with evidence — George Harrison's sitar, the French passages in "Michelle" — of their skyscraping ambition. **Standout track:** "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)"

**Revolver**

CAPITOL, 1966

Arguably the real classic Beatles album, with unprecedented sonic dabbings matched to peerless songwriting. Recorded on drugs, you know. **Standout track:** "Tomorrow Never Knows"

**Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band**

CAPITOL, 1967

Creativity run wild, with the four at their most wise ("She's Leaving Home"), nightmarish ("A Day in the Life"), witty and intoxicatingly tuneful. **Standout track:** "A Day in the Life"

**The Beatles**

CAPITOL, 1968

The "white" album. Acoustic ballads, proto-metal, 12-bar rock & roll, avant-garde experiments: The Beatles sound like masters of them all. **Standout track:** "Happiness Is a Warm Gun"

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## BOB DYLAN & THE BAND The Basement Tapes

COLUMBIA, 1975

These homemade demos are quintessential Dylan performances, gritty and spontaneous. Recorded in 1967 with his new group, the Band, they easily outshine many of the tracks on his official albums.

**Standout track:** "This Wheel's On Fire"



## BOB DYLAN Blood On the Tracks

COLUMBIA, 1975

In 1975, Dylan was in the throes of divorce. His best album since *Blonde On Blonde* was the result. Its intimate ambience and gorgeously warm production still make many acolytes claim that it's the finest album he's ever made.

**Standout track:** "Tangled Up in Blue"



## BOB DYLAN Love and Theft

COLUMBIA, 2001

Released on September 11, Dylan's best album in a decade was downright prophetic. A recording steeped in borrowed blues perfect for verses riddled with apocalyptic revelations and other things "too terrible to be true." Unnerving.

**Standout track:** "Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum"



## THE EAGLES Hotel California

ASYLUM, 1976

Balmy West Coast country-rock at its chilling best. Don't let familiarity breed contempt: "Hotel California" remains a benchmark song, and the rest of this album, although dwarfed by the title track, is a soft-rock masterpiece. And *that's* something you don't hear too often.

**Standout track:** "Hotel California"



## THE EAGLES Their Greatest Hits (1971-1976)

ASYLUM, 1976

They liked Gram Parsons, drugs, rock & roll and money, but they sounded smooth as platinum, with harmonies that made the Beach Boys seem like pigs. The Eagles had hits like teens have acne: everywhere and all the time.

**Standout track:** "Take It to the Limit"



## ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA Strange Magic: The Best of Electric Light Orchestra

EPIC, 1995

Part British whimsy, part faux classical, but mostly a better-produced Beatles, Electric Light Orchestra were the sound of the mid-'70s for a bespectacled generation.

**Standout track:** "Livin' Thing"



## EVERLY BROTHERS All-Time Original Hits

RHINO, 1999

A huge influence on the Beatles, the ever-squabbling Don and Phil Everly were energetic, country-influenced rock & rollers who proved even before the Fabs did that pop could motor and that tunes were no enemy to rocking.

**Standout track:** "Cathy's Clown"



Bob Dylan, recording the ill-fated "ventriloquist tapes"



## FLEETWOOD MAC Rumours

REPRISE, 1975

On which an ailing Brit-blues band is transformed into megaplatinum superstars by the arrival of brilliant songwriter-guitarist-producer Lindsey Buckingham and his hippie-chick partner, Stevie Nicks. A benchmark for aspiring AOR tunesmiths.

**Standout track:** "Rhiannon"



## FLEETWOOD MAC Sin City: The Very Best of the Flying Burrito Brothers

WARNER BROS., 1977

The culmination of F-Mac's transformation from British blues icons to masters of California pop, *Rumours* spent an astonishing 31 weeks at number 1. Feather-light harmonies and deep, dark soap-opera emotions give it real bite.

**Standout track:** "Go Your Own Way"



## THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS Sin City: The Very Best of the Flying Burrito Brothers

UNIVERSAL, 2002

Piloted by ex-Byrds Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons, the classic Burritos lineup lasted for two albums, but it alchemized the monster known as country-rock.

**Standout track:** "Hot Burrito #2"

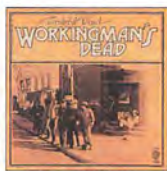


## PETER GABRIEL Workingman's Dead

GEFFEN, 1980

Acknowledged as the former Genesis man's best solo effort. Paranoia and navel gazing has never sounded so captivating; the production is beautifully sympathetic; and with songs as extraordinary as "Games Without Frontiers," there are no defects.

**Standout track:** "Games Without Frontiers"



## GRATEFUL DEAD American Beauty

WARNER BROS., 1970

Temporarily putting aside their long space jams and LSD-inspired studio games, the Dead mined Hank Williams, Robert Johnson and Buck Owens for this album full of working-class blues.

**Standout track:** "Uncle John's Band"



## GRATEFUL DEAD American Beauty

WARNER BROS., 1970

The Dead's second great country-rock album is a masterpiece of cosmic American song-writing, mostly acoustic arrangements and angelic vocal harmonies. You'll hardly notice the absence of guitar solos.

**Standout track:** "Box of Rain"





## GRATEFUL DEAD

### Two From the Vault

GRATEFUL DEAD, 1992

Although they still relied on keyboardist Ron "Pigpen" McKernan's R&B growl for their power, this set finds the Dead beginning the transition from LSD-soaked folk-blues act to psychedelic, genre-destroying rock explorers.

**Standout track:** "Dark Star"



## JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

### Are You Experienced?

MCA, 1967

The most thrilling electric guitar playing ever recorded. The ejaculatory spurts of "Foxy Lady" seemed to catch even Hendrix marveling at his own genius. The reissue also offers singles "Hey Joe" and "Purple Haze." Lucky you.

**Standout track:** "Foxy Lady"



Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page: "These rubber shoes are the bomb!"



## JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

MCA, 1968

The guitar genius's third and most ambitious album is a sprawling, eclectic masterpiece, taking in jazzy extended jams, concise riff-pop, psychedelic reveries, cosmic dashiki soul and fevered blues deconstructions. **Standout track:** "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)"



## BUDDY HOLLY

MCA, 1993

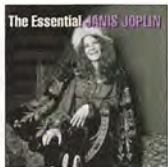
The Beatles got the inspiration for their name from Holly's backing band, the Crickets. Had he lived, Holly might have been their competitor. The first wise white rock & roll songwriter, Holly remolded the primal beat and made eyeglasses cool. **Standout track:** "Not Fade Away"



## JOAN JETT

MERCURY/BLACKHEART, 1997

Starting in 1981, when Jett and her bad reputation split from the all-girl, exploitative Runaways, she rocked harder and more consistently than anyone without a dick, inspiring a generation of riot-grrrl stepdaughters. **Standout track:** "I Love Rock & Roll"



## JANIS JOPLIN

COLUMBIA, 2003

Joplin could belt out basic blues, but her electrifying performances prefigured female rockers as disparate as Bonnie Raitt and Courtney Love. But her early years with acid-tinged Big Brother & the Holding Company are the most rewarding listening here. **Standout track:** "Piece of My Heart"



## THE KINKS

RHINO, 1989

The crowning glory of garage rock, courtesy of Dave Davies's blitzkrieg solo on "You Really Got Me." Brother Ray was already a master of the wry and bittersweet, and this collection of 18 early singles doesn't even get up to 1967's "Waterloo Sunset." **Standout track:** "I'm Not Like Everybody Else"



## THE KINKS

REPRISE, 1972

The Kinks' glorious 1966-'70 era documents not only a vanishing England, but endearing melancholy. Magical songwriting and stoic ensemble work make a first-rate introduction to this influential but still underheralded band. **Standout track:** "Waterloo Sunset"



## KISS

CASABLANCA, 1978

Kiss's hits underscored their status as a first-class heavy-metal pop band. Thumping good tunes and Spinal Tap-like lyrics (Paul Stanley's "Love Gun," Gene Simmons's "God of Thunder") reign supreme. Alas, *Double Platinum* predates their disco phase. **Standout track:** "Detroit Rock City"



## LED ZEPPELIN

ATLANTIC, 1969

Guitarist Jimmy Page's panoramic vision and heavy metal's very existence begin here. Strap yourself in as folk, '60s pop and blues meet electricity and singer Robert Plant emerges, grunting and victorious, like prehistoric man discovering fire. **Standout track:** "Communication Breakdown"



## LED ZEPPELIN

ATLANTIC, 1969

If their debut suggested that Page's talents were flowering spectacularly, six months later Led Zeppelin delivered a thrilling ensemble piece. John Bonham's brutal genius is showcased on "Moby Dick," but it's Plant who truly thrusts himself to center stage. **Standout track:** "Whole Lotta Love"

**ARTISTS' PICKS: Stephan Jenkins, Third Eye Blind**

→ **CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN**  
Our Beloved Revolutionary Sweetheart  
VIRGIN, 1988

"Camper incorporated Berlin cabaret and Depression-era music into college rock."





## LED ZEPPELIN

ATLANTIC, 1971

Formerly known as *Four Symbols*, this combines heavy metal ("Rock and Roll") with densely arranged blues, heady English folk and a touching British hanker for the moist pleasures of California. You've heard "Stairway to Heaven"? Page plays God. **Standout track:** "Stairway to Heaven"



## LED ZEPPELIN

ATLANTIC, 1975

A double album of immense scope that demonstrates why Zep were much more than a lumpen rock band. Sometimes funky ("Trampled Underfoot") or countryish ("Down by the Sea-side"), by today's standards this isn't very heavy. But its power remains undimmed. **Standout track:** "Kashmir"

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## THE BEST OF

### POP-METAL



All the riffs and mascara you'll ever need

**BON JOVI**  
*Slippery When Wet*  
MERCURY, 1986  
Musically fluffy? Possibly. Infectious as hell? Absolutely. **Standout track:** "Livin' On a Prayer"

**BOSTON**  
*Boston*  
EPIC, 1976  
Can anyone hear the opening bars of "More Than a Feeling" without strapping on his air guitar? **Standout track:** "More Than a Feeling"

**DEF LEPPARD**  
*Pyromania*  
MERCURY, 1983  
An enormous, amplified shout of testosterone and joy. **Standout track:** "Photograph"

**FOREIGNER**  
*The Very Best... and Beyond*  
CAPITOL, 1992  
There's no better music to pound the steering wheel to while driving alone at night and mourning "the one who got away." **Standout track:** "I Want to Know What Love Is"

**GUNS N' ROSES**  
*Appetite for Destruction*  
Geffen, 1987  
Hollywood urchins dressed up in hooker's clothes, GN'R single-handedly transfused punk's mean spirit into the corpse of '80s rock. **Standout track:** "Sweet Child O' Mine"

**MÖTLEY CRÜE**  
*Decade of Decadence '81-'91*  
ELEKTRA, 1991  
Like Kiss, they recognized the appeal of pop hooks and parental disapproval, and shamelessly exploited both. **Standout track:** "Girls, Girls, Girls"

**QUEEN**  
*Greatest Hits, I & II*  
HOLLYWOOD, 1995  
The Brits' sheer exuberance and willingness to give any style of music their own over-the-top stamp makes this package a joy. **Standout track:** "Bohemian Rhapsody"

**VAN HALEN**  
*Van Halen*  
WARNER BROS., 1978  
Much imitated, never equaled. And, unlike much hard rock, fun, fun, fun all the way. **Standout track:** "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love"



**JOHN LENNON**  
*John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*  
CAPITOL, 1970

With the simplest musical backing, the former Beatle invents angst-rock with primal-scream howls about the perils of fame, the illusions of the '60s, the British class system and the nonexistence of God, arriving finally at a brave conclusion: "The dream is over." **Standout track:** "God"



**LYNYRD SKYNYRD**  
*Pronounced Leh-Nerd Skin-Nerd*  
MCA, 1973

Skynyrd's debut is remarkable for its sheer songwriting confidence and Ronnie Van Zant's flawless vocal performances. The man sings his heart out throughout, while "Free Bird" proves that dueling guitars do have their place. **Standout track:** "Free Bird"



**JOHN LENNON**  
*Imagine*  
CAPITOL, 1971

Worldly, romantic and spiteful, *Imagine* is easily Lennon's most cohesive and fully realized solo album. He mercilessly lambastes everyone from Richard Nixon to Paul McCartney, but as usual, he sings most of the best tunes in the direction of Yoko Ono. **Standout track:** "Imagine"



**LYNYRD SKYNYRD**  
*Street Survivors*  
MCA, 1977

If you think teary-eyed rockers treasure *Street Survivors* simply because it appeared mere days before the plane crash that killed much of the band, think again. Tight but loose, raw but relaxed, this is effortlessly righteous material from a band at its zenith. **Standout track:** "That Smell"



**JERRY LEE LEWIS**  
*All Killer, No Filler: The Anthology*  
RHINO, 1993

The wildest of the first rock & rollers, Jerry Lee lived how he sang: slightly crazed, on the edge of something dark and inspired. Note, too, that he's canny enough to have become a great survivor. **Standout track:** "Great Balls of Fire"

## ARTISTS' PICKS: Lucinda Williams

→ **SADE**  
*Lovers Rock*

EPIC, 2000

"Her voice is stunning, and her songs about prostitutes and the working class are terribly beautiful, bittersweet and meaningful."



**MEAT LOAF**  
*Bat Out of Hell*

EPIC/LEGACY, 1978

If Bruce Springsteen had written a Broadway musical, this would've been it. No one could write for Meat Loaf but genius Jim Steinman, and no one could sing Steinman except "The Loaf." More than any other record, this is all of rock in one album. **Standout track:** "For Cryin' Out Loud"



**METALLICA**  
*Master of Puppets*

ELEKTRA, 1986

Having revitalized metal in the early '80s, these San Franciscans smartly refined the most distinctive elements of their first two albums for this perfectly crafted creative high. For many, it remains the greatest metal album ever. **Standout track:** "Master of Puppets"



**METALLICA**  
*Metallica*

ELEKTRA, 1991

The album that moved thrash-metal onto a whole new plane. This is the sound of Metallica growing up, spreading out and making music that's always heavy in intent but also shaded with subtlety and grace. Astonishingly, even the ballads manage to work. **Standout track:** "Enter Sandman"

Metallica rejoice at having persuaded Lars to wear those damn stupid sunglasses again.



**THE STEVE MILLER BAND**  
*Greatest Hits 1974-78*

CAPITOL, 1978

This is all you really need to enjoy the airless pleasures of Miller's '70s FM rock. Just three albums are plundered for this best-of set, but it's still a damn-near-perfect aid to growing your hair and, hey, rolling with it. **Standout track:** "Take the Money and Run"



**JONI MITCHELL**  
*Blue*

REPRISE, 1971

"The bed's too big/The frying pan's too wide." You know the feeling. Mitchell's acoustic confessionals of freewheeling love and fuckups among the L.A. hipperati touch everyone. *Blue's* open-hearted beauty inspired Annie Lennox, Alanis Morissette... and Led Zeppelin. **Standout track:** "Carey"



**JONI MITCHELL**  
*Court and Spark*

ASYLUM, 1974

Rarely has romantic longing been so poetically documented. Mitchell circles the singles scene ("People's Parties"), yearns for a lover ("Car On a Hill") and still finds time to tear strips out of a cynical music industry in the David Geffen-inspired "Free Man in Paris." **Standout track:** "Free Man in Paris"



**VAN MORRISON**  
**Astral Weeks**

WARNER BROS., 1968

Take a white thug-hippie from Belfast who sings like Ray Charles, drop some acid and give him a great jazz band. Bliss. This cryptic dreamscape features some of the most beautiful singing on record and some of the most gently erotic music. **Standout track:** "Madame George"



**VAN MORRISON**  
**Moondance**

WARNER BROS., 1970

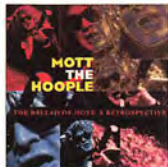
Romantic, sensual, finger-clicking, free as a bird: The belligerent Belfast cowboy never sounded happier or more effortlessly in touch with his muse. Is it rock? Jazz? Folk-poetry? Rhythm & blues? Morrison takes what he loves and makes it his own. **Standout track:** "Into the Mystic"



**MOTÖRHEAD**  
**No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith**

SANCTUARY, 1980

Road dogs Motörhead were a barnacle on the ass of British rock for most of the late '70s. Then came this pivotal live album, which kicked their amphetamine-fueled din out of the Hell's Angels social club and onto the U.K. album charts. **Standout track:** "Ace of Spades"



**MOTT THE HOOPLE**  
**The Ballad of Mott: A Retrospective**

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1993

The British pop-rockers managed a short string of chart hits in the early '70s before imploding. This grab bag of singles and album cuts salutes their legacy of Bowie-style glam-metal. **Standout track:** "All the Young Dudes"



**RANDY NEWMAN**  
**12 Songs**

REPRISE, 1970

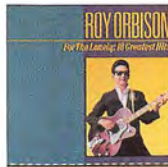
After the glossy wide-screen sonics of his debut, Newman pares back his sound and vastly improves it. His shrewish cynicism begins to leak out here and there, but the tunes and spirit are so engaging, you may not notice the vitriol. **Standout track:** "Old Kentucky Home"



**RANDY NEWMAN**  
**Good Old Boys**

REPRISE, 1974

Few subjects have seemed so suited to Newman's prickly satire as the deep South. He concentrates on the region's more malign aspects, but his drunks, losers and bigots come with an affecting empathy. His best-realized album, without question. **Standout track:** "Louisiana 1927"



**ROY ORBISON**  
**For the Lonely: 18 Greatest Hits**

RHINO, 1988

No compilation covers all of Orbison's 30-year career, but this best anthologyizes his peak, when his mind-boggling vocals gave rock & roll an almost operatic aspect. When he collides with riff-based raunch on "Oh, Pretty Woman," it's a joy. **Standout track:** "Only the Lonely"



**GRAM PARSONS**  
**Sacred Hearts & Fallen Angels: The Gram Parsons Anthology**

RHINO, 2001

With a mournful voice and a new outlook, Parsons began the country-rock revolution. Others plugged into the fuzzbox; he dabbled with the pedal steel. **Standout track:** "Hot Burrito #1"



**TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS**  
**Greatest Hits**

MCA, 1993

Outwardly dealing in feel-good harmonies, inwardly Tom Petty crafts the best cynical pop songs in the world. A fat-free collection that in one manageable fix condenses 17 years of Petty's forte: air-punching hard rock with a nasty black heart. **Standout track:** "Free Fallin'"

# Lucinda Williams

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# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Classic Rock



Pink Floyd: Goddamn these duvet covers.



**PHISH**  
Live Phish, Vol. 11: 11.17.97  
ELEKTRA, 2002

A definitive point in a collection of 16 live albums released in 2001 and 2002 from a band never designed to do things by halves. This is the pick; they move from density to space, going ethereal and funky where they once noodled out. **Standout track:** "Ghost"



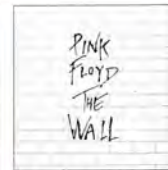
**PINK FLOYD**  
Dark Side of the Moon  
CAPITOL, 1973

Rock doesn't get any more classic than this perfect song cycle recorded after the trippier *Meddle*. Demo your stereo with this hybrid of Wagnerian guitar, transporting soundscapes, manic-depressive lyrics and studio mind-fuckery. **Standout track:** "Us & Them"



**PINK FLOYD**  
Wish You Were Here  
CAPITOL, 1975

*Dark Side of the Moon* boosted Floyd planet-wide; this saw them embracing their past for cathartic inspiration. Huge and eerie in sound, but anguished in mood: They made it in memory of co-founder and acid casualty Syd Barrett. **Standout track:** "Wish You Were Here"



**PINK FLOYD**  
The Wall  
COLUMBIA, 1979

Rarely has a rock star gazed so fixedly at his own navel as Pink Floyd's Roger Waters does here. Miraculously, it works, making this bleak fable of alienation and despair the kind of thing that could give concept double albums a good name. **Standout track:** "Comfortably Numb"



**ELVIS PRESLEY**  
Sunrise  
RCA, 1999

Collecting all of young Elvis's world-changing Sun recordings, these two discs chronicle the invention of rock & roll. Attacking country and R&B hits of the '40s and '50s with raw energy, he sounded playful, arrogant, nervous and transcendently sexy. **Standout track:** "That's All Right"



**ELVIS PRESLEY**  
From Elvis in Memphis  
RCA, 1969

"Elvis died the day he went in the army," said John Lennon. He was wrong, and here's why. This terribly masterful blend of gospel, soul and R&B could have been made only in Tennessee. The King was back in rude health. **Standout track:** "Only the Strong Survive"



**ELVIS PRESLEY**  
30 #1 Hits  
RCA, 2002

He sold millions years before million-sellers were the norm and topped the charts long after his contemporaries had shuffled into obscurity. A quarter-century has passed since his untimely death, and his greatest haven't lost their kick. **Standout track:** "Suspicious Minds"



**THE RASPBERRIES**  
Capitol Collectors Series  
CAPITOL, 1991

Too early for the power-pop revival, Ohio's retro-rockers in suits should have rivaled Elton John in the early '70s. The Beatles, the Who and the Beach Boys all inspired the Raspberries' sound. Why didn't the world listen? **Standout track:** "Go All the Way"



**LINDA RONSTADT**  
The Very Best of Linda Ronstadt  
RHINO, 2002

She captured hearts and minds in the '70s by roller-skating on an album sleeve and singing so well, you couldn't help be moved. How so? As pretty as she was, she could make you believe in "When Will I Be Loved?" **Standout track:** "You're No Good"



**TODD RUNDGREN**  
The Very Best of Todd Rundgren  
RHINO, 1997

Rundgren's career is almost impossible to compile, but this set is rewarding. Marvel at a host of beautifully executed styles, from Beatlesque pop to jazz-rock, and this CD becomes your gate to whole new worlds. **Standout track:** "I Saw the Light"



**BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND**  
Greatest Hits  
CAPITOL, 1994

With a voice that growls and groans but still manages to move, Seger turns the Midwest into a landscape for everyday heroes. And there's nothing cloying about it, which makes even "Against the Wind" work. **Standout track:** "Night Moves"



**PAUL SIMON**  
The Paul Simon Collection: On My Way, Don't Know Where I'm Goin'  
WARNER BROS., 2002

Including a couple of S&G oldies rewarmed live 30 years on, this is a 24-track solo career survey. Sixteen are gems of wistful, literate street-corner pop with a tropical tang. **Standout track:** "Kodachrome"



**SIMON & GARFUNKEL**  
The Best of Simon & Garfunkel  
COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1999

They didn't dress well or look cool, but they did make timeless rainy-day dorm-room music. Simon's meticulous, topical folk-pop brimmed with melancholy and had harmonies that could part clouds. **Standout track:** "The Boxer"

## ARTISTS' PICKS: JC Chasez, 'N Sync

→ **COMMON**  
Like Water for Chocolate  
MCA, 2000

"He takes a really intelligent approach to political hip-hop, and he's not afraid to tell a love story, which is very rare in hip-hop. That cat is something extra."



**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
Born to Run  
COLUMBIA, 1975

Where the Boss was really born. Big songs with a big sound to match, and an absolute lyrical extravaganza, as Springsteen paints a powerful picture of American suburban street life. The title track's chorus demands to be sung loudly when drunk. **Standout track:** "Born to Run"



**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
Darkness on the Edge of Town  
COLUMBIA, 1978

After a three-year court-enforced silence, the Boss risked all on 10 songs about life's losers with only the narrowest horizon between hope and despair. His fans rose to the challenge, and his career restarted the first time around. **Standout track:** "Prove It All Night"



**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**  
Born in the U.S.A.  
COLUMBIA, 1984  
A message not fully received back in '84, when the angst and anger of the title track's Vietnam vet found itself coopted into a Ronald Reagan campaign anthem. This is stadium rock with a concealed dark side. **Standout track:** "Born in the U.S.A."



**STEELY DAN**  
Countdown to Ecstasy  
ABC, 1973  
Buoyed by the reception to *Can't Buy a Thrill*, Walter Becker and Donald Fagen added jazz, black humor and rock dynamics. Impeccably played, steeped in learning but full of hooks and hits, this confirmed them as the most unlikely of superstars. **Standout track:** "My Old School"



**JAMES TAYLOR**  
Greatest Hits  
WARNER BROS., 1976  
Taylor was as emblematic of the '70s as Kurt Cobain would be to the '90s. As a sensitive troubadour who suffered and took drugs for his art, he defined the singer-songwriter archetype. This collection, devoted to his early work, is a poignant, heart-wrenching marvel. **Standout track:** "Fire and Rain"



**STEELY DAN**  
Can't Buy a Thrill  
MCA, 1972  
Seventies FM rock with a flinty heart. As debuts go, this is remarkably sophisticated: Surreal lyrics blend with music that appears instantly commercial yet gradually reveals a weird undertow of jazz. "Reelin' in the Years" is just too good to be true. **Standout track:** "Reelin' in the Years"



**STEELY DAN**  
Pretzel Logic  
ABC, 1974  
Stoner-rock with a Master's degree. Becker and Fagen's third album splices their lissome jazz and blues with a side order of corrosive wit and sparks of guitar feedback. It's smart-ass pop without a doubt, but the prickly duo's intelligence never eclipses the tunes. **Standout track:** "Rikki Don't Lose That Number"



**RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON**  
Shoot Out the Lights  
HANNIBAL/RYKODISC, 1982  
There's nothing less likely to save a failing marriage than recording an album of painfully honest songs about it. *Shoot Out the Lights* is uncomfortable but compulsive. *Folk rock* is far too feeble a term. **Standout track:** "Wall of Death"

Bruce Springsteen: "Maybe I should have gotten a bigger stage . . ."



**STEELY DAN**  
Katy Lied  
ABC, 1975  
Cementing the commercial breakthrough conferred by *Pretzel Logic*, *Katy Lied* gave Steely Dan's blues-dipped jazz-rock another lap of honor, while easing up — just a little — on the biting wit. It remains the last word in precision-built, supersmart '70s rock & roll. **Standout track:** "Doctor Wu"



**STEELY DAN**  
Aja  
MCA, 1977  
Ignoring punk, the impeccable jazz-rock ironists take an album off from messing with people's heads to deliver chocolatey grooves, manly soloing and the oft-sampled "Peg." Mellow to the point of catatonia, for when you really need that kind of thing. **Standout track:** "Deacon Blues"



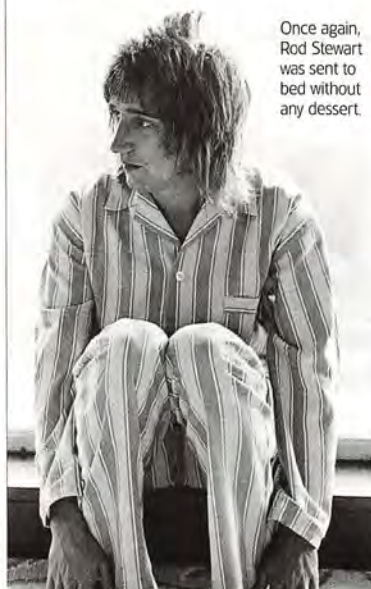
**CAT STEVENS**  
Remember: The Ultimate Collection  
ISLAND/UNIVERSAL, 1999  
Twenty-four songs from a man who later changed his name and religion, but not his nature. Stevens had shown love and humanity all along, with an easy voice destined to sing these beautiful songs with effortless grace. **Standout track:** "Matthew & Son"



**ROD STEWART**  
Storyteller  
WARNER BROS., 1989  
Four CDs that trace Stewart's 30-year passage from the London blues scene to transatlantic soft-rock behemoth. The best stuff, inevitably, is his early- to mid-'70s material, in which the music coheres with that remarkable voice to irresistible effect. **Standout track:** "You Wear It Well"



**T. REX**  
20th Century Boy: The Ultimate Collection  
HIP-O, 2002  
Fusing the dumbness of early rock & roll with '70s glam, Marc Bolan managed to make Chuck Berry riffs and nonsensical lyrics sound fantastic. Albums were never his forte: This is all you need. **Standout track:** "20th Century Boy"



Once again, Rod Stewart was sent to bed without any dessert.

**THE BEST OF THE ROLLING STONES**



From R&B pioneers to walking chemistry sets

**The Rolling Stones, Now!**  
ABKCO, 1965  
In which five white men from southern England prove that they are accomplished merchants of music pioneered by African-Americans. **Standout track:** "Heart of Stone"

**Aftermath**  
ABKCO, 1966  
A dark, angry album ("Paint It Black," "Stupid Girl"), but then, that's what they did best. **Standout track:** "Under My Thumb"

**Between the Buttons**  
ABKCO, 1967  
Baroque, lithe and urbane, this abandons hardcore blues roots for an original pop voice. **Standout track:** "Let's Spend the Night Together"

**Beggars Banquet**  
ABKCO, 1968  
With Keith Richards at the helm, they finally trade those beat-pop roots for a darker stripe of heavy, intimidating rock & roll. **Standout track:** "Sympathy for the Devil"

**Let It Bleed**  
ABKCO, 1969  
As Brian Jones fades, Jagger and Richards break new ground in riveting tales of sex, violence and desperate excess. **Standout track:** "Gimme Shelter"

**Sticky Fingers**  
VIRGIN, 1971  
The Stones' most elegantly wasted album, with "Sister Morphine" the most brazen drug tune among an armful of subtler ones. **Standout track:** "Wild Horses"

**Exile on Main Street**  
VIRGIN, 1972  
By 1972 the Stones had reinvented the blues in their own image: dirty, arrogant, sexy, smart and soulful. **Standout track:** "Tumbling Dice"

**Some Girls**  
VIRGIN, 1978  
The Stones are dead; long live the Stones. Smart self-parody makes ersatz disco ("Miss You"), country ("Far Away Eyes") and punk ("Shattered") sound better than the real things. **Standout track:** "Beast of Burden"

# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Classic Rock



**THE WHO**  
**Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy**  
MCA, 1971

The first (and best) Who compilation collects revelatory '60s singles that act out insecurity and frustration with frenzied intensity in blazes of guitar feedback and drum mayhem. This is rock played with unequaled musicianship, style and abandon. **Standout track:** "I Can See for Miles"



**THE WHO**  
**Who's Next**  
MCA, 1971

They were once too steeped in English eccentricity to appeal to everyday Americans, but *Who's Next* made the Who a global concern. Here, angry rhetoric and Pete Townshend's spiritualism were smuggled inside riffs that could fell a man from 20 paces. **Standout track:** "Won't Get Fooled Again"



**LUCINDA WILLIAMS**  
**Car Wheels on a Gravel Road**  
POLYGRAM, 1998

For Williams, quality matters more than quantity — so in the first 20 years of her career, she delivered just five albums, and this was the best. Simple truths, real situations and honest feelings beautifully sung. **Standout track:** "Drunken Angel"



**THE YARDBIRDS**  
**Ultimate!**  
RHINO, 2001

Eric Clapton's presence ensured that these Brit-blues pioneers would create a cult that survives to this day. The later recruitment of both Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page made them legendary. As this two-CD set proves, the music backs up the myth. **Standout track:** "Shapes of Things"

**ARTISTS' PICKS: Mike McCready, Pearl Jam**

→ **SOCIAL DISTORTION**  
**White Light, White Heat, White Trash**  
EPIC, 1996

"This is one of my favorite albums of all time. The passion and conviction in the guitars is incredible."



**THE WHO**  
**Quadrophenia**  
MCA, 1973

By this point, Pete Townshend thought that 12-song albums were for losers. So he came up with an opus about the Who's original audience: London's mods. The concept aside, *Quadrophenia* contains enough of his band's potent rock to ensure it was a winner. **Standout track:** "5:15"



**LUCINDA WILLIAMS**  
**Lucinda Williams**  
KOCH, 1988

The notorious perfectionist needed only 40 minutes to demonstrate everything good that contemporary "roots music" had to offer. Practically all Southern genres are combined in these yearning, gritty, drawling songs. **Standout track:** "Passionate Kisses"



**NEIL YOUNG**  
**After the Gold Rush**  
REPRISE, 1970

A classic collection of mainly intimate reflections ("Southern Man" is the notable exception), this is where Young sealed his reputation while also introducing the remarkable talents of 17-year-old guitarist Nils Lofgren. **Standout track:** "Only Love Can Break Your Heart"



**NEIL YOUNG**  
**Harvest**  
REPRISE, 1972

Tunes ache and hearts break in a nasal country croon sung to a lonesome guitar (with a side order of patched-denim rock and symphony orchestra) in that endless soul search. After all, a singer-songwriter's gotta do what a singer-songwriter's gotta do. **Standout track:** "Heart of Gold"



**NEIL YOUNG**  
**Tonight's the Night**  
REPRISE, 1975

A memorial to Crazy Horse's guitarist Danny Whitten, a heroin victim, this finds a potent mixture of grief and tequila taking Young and his associates perilously close to the edge. Harrowing and ragged, but magnificent. **Standout track:** "Tonight's the Night"



**NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE**  
**Rust Never Sleeps**  
REPRISE, 1979

Half electric, half acoustic, all amazing. This collection of new songs, some recorded on Young's 1978 tour, was imbued with his ever-peculiar mix of beguiling sentimentality, cussedness, bravery and willful conservatism. **Standout track:** "Hey Hey My My (Into the Black)"



**NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE**  
**Weld**  
REPRISE, 1991

Grandpa Grunge in all his ragged glory. Young's third live set was packed with sonic slop and rough edges, providing a template for future alt-rockers the world over. The sound of metal on metal, delivered with punch-drunk swagger. **Standout track:** "Powderfinger"



Neil Young: "Now let's see Crosby, Stills & Nash find me!"



**FRANK ZAPPA & THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION**  
**We're Only in It for the Money**  
RYKO DISC, 1968

Zappa's skewed, salacious world-view floods the Mothers' second album, offset by instrumental showmanship and his growing skill as a writer. **Standout track:** "What's the Ugliest Part of Your Body"



**WARREN ZEVON**  
**Genius: The Best of Warren Zevon**  
RHINO, 2002

The Chicagoan's imminent demise has served to remind what a talent the world is about to lose. Zevon's humor was black, but he was always as likely to cheerily lacerate himself as others. **Standout track:** "Werewolves of London"



**ZZ TOP**  
**Greatest Hits**  
WARNER BROS., 1992

The best of Phase Two ZZ Top, where an '80s modernizing of the Texas trio's boogie sound yielded such monster hits as "Gimme All Your Lovin'." They also threw in a few reminders of their former lo-fi choogle — "Tush," "La Grange" — just for good measure. **Standout track:** "Legs"

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# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Alternative Rock



**TORI AMOS**  
*Under the Pink*  
ATLANTIC, 1994

Effortlessly straddling the middle ground between Joni Mitchell and Kate Bush, Tori Amos and her Bosendorfer piano detailed tales of poor-quality sex, hostile waitresses and Amos's trademark kookiness. She's not as sweet as she looks, obviously.

**Standout track:** "Cornflake Girl"



**THE B-52'S**  
*Nude On the Moon*  
RHINO, 2002

Before R.E.M., Athens, Georgia's most famous group was this cartoonish quintet. On this compilation, their obsessions — the '60s, beehive hairdos, Yoko Ono, camp and New Wave dance — coalesce to form a very strange, compelling world. **Standout track:** "Dance This Mess Around"



**BASEMENT JAXX**  
*Remedy*  
XL/ASTRALWERKS, 1999

Dance music is usually keen to pigeonhole itself, but British duo Felix Buxton and Simon Ratcliffe broke free of genre restrictions with dazzling success on their debut. It's a giddy trip that devours P-funk, disco, ragga, garage and everything in between. **Standout track:** "Red Alert"



**BEASTIE BOYS**  
*Licensed to Ill*  
DEF JAM, 1986

The trio snubs it now, but this album don't care nothin' about no one — least of all left-wing milquetoasts such as Adam Yauch, so confident is it in its massive beats, masturbatory fantasies and power-whine rhyme swapping. **Standout track:** "(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (To Party)"

**ARTISTS' PICKS: Bert McCracken, the Used**

→ **EYEHATEGOD**

**Dopesick**  
CENTURY MEDIA, 1996

"Dopesick is a hella sick record — it's heavy-as-fuck metal! They're supposed to be from Louisiana, but I think they're straight from the fires of hell."



**BEASTIE BOYS**  
*Paul's Boutique*  
CAPITOL, 1989

No one bought it at the time, but the Beasties' second CD, *Paul's Boutique*, has since been hailed as their magnum opus. After the thuggish simplicity of *Licensed to Ill*, it's no wonder the follow-up's ingenious bouillabaisse of funk, rock and speed-shouting threw a few.

**Standout track:** "Hey Ladies"



**BECK**  
*Mellow Gold*  
Geffen, 1993

Still available in both "clean" and "explicit" versions, Beck Hansen's breakthrough patented the template for the irony-laden '90s with its fusion of country, folk and hip-hop and wry, knowing lyrics. It's no fun without "Fuckin' With My Head," though.

**Standout track:** "Loser"



**BECK**  
*Odelay*  
Geffen, 1996

If Beck still felt like a one-hit slacker wonder after *Mellow Gold*, then *Odelay* settled all bets. Riding the line between smart-ass and just plain smart, the cut-and-paste wunderkind sings a soulful verse and slings a fair rhyme.

Suddenly, rock & roll is fun again. **Standout track:** "Where It's At"



**BIG STAR**  
*#1 Record/ Radio City*  
Fantasy, 1992

Two albums recorded in 1972 and 1974 — the missing link between the Rolling Stones circa *Aftermath* and the new wave, with a side order of Dixie soul and chiming, glad-to-be-alive guitars by raggedy-voiced cult pinup Alex Chilton.

**Standout track:** "September Gurls"



**BIG STAR**  
*Third/Sister Lovers*  
Rykodisc, 1978

Posthumously released, Big Star's third album was the final gasp of air from one of rock's most influential cults. However, their power-pop took a chilly detour when Chilton's inspiration turned erratic and desperate. Best listened to alone.

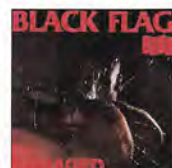
**Standout track:** "Kanga-Roo"



**BJÖRK**  
*Greatest Hits*  
Elektra, 2002

The best introduction to Björk's fascinatingly diverse catalog arrived to mark her first decade as a solo artist. Compiled by fans, it's a stunningly inventive collection of alien electro-pop from a one-off talent. She's Icelandic, you know.

**Standout track:** "All Is Full of Love"



**BLACK FLAG**  
*Damaged*  
SST, 1981

Before gangsta rap, Black Flag were as street as they came. But while new addition Henry Rollins adds doomed-monster charisma to the band's everydude wall of thrash, the best moments happen when happy adolescent nihilism trumps existential despair.

**Standout track:** "TV Party"



The Beastie Boys: "So, that's nine beers and a very small pie..."



**BLINK-182**  
*Enema of the State*  
MCA, 1999

Slack-jawed toilet humor bolted to contagious riffs, Blink-182's fourth offering is a gift for legions of like-minded teenage fans. Cleverly, though, the porn fixation and fart gags rarely cloud their razor-smart pop-rock.

**Standout track:** "What's My Age Again?"



**DAVID BOWIE**  
*Low*  
Virgin, 1977

The first installment of the Berlin trilogy (*Heroes* and *Lodger* would soon follow). The chemically altered Bowie turns in a masterful first half of minimal, artful pop before confounding everyone with the icy, groundbreaking electronics of the second half.

**Standout track:** "Sound and Vision"



**DAVID BOWIE**  
*Best of Bowie*  
Virgin, 2002

A best-of that actually succeeds in editing a dazzling three-decade career into 39 tracks. Savor the transition as razor-cheekboned lady-boy mutates into bespoke-suited gentleman rocker, with a careful track listing avoiding any possible slip-ups along the way.

**Standout track:** "Ziggy Stardust"





### BILLY BRAGG & WILCO

**Mermaid Avenue**

ELEKTRA, 1998

Unexpected collaboration between English bloke, alt-country band and Woody Guthrie, deceased lefty folk giant. Guthrie's daughter invited Bragg and Wilco to write current music for his unrecorded lyrics. Straight from the heart of politics and love, it worked.

**Standout track:** "California Stars"



### BREEDERS

**Last Splash**

4AD/ELEKTRA, 1993

Ex-Pixie Kim Deal, her sister Kelley, ex-Perfect Disaster bassist Josephine Wiggs and some drummer built a sexy, endlessly charming guitar-pop album out of spare parts left over from Amerindie noise-punk, accidentally ushering in the '90s alt-rock boom as they went.

**Standout track:** "Cannonball"



Coldplay show why Brits should never high-five.



### BUZZCOCKS

**Singles Going Steady**

I.R.S., 1980

The A-sides and nearly-as-brilliant B-sides of Manchester, England's punk romantics. Like Green Day with a brain, like Blink-182 with a heart: from "I Don't Mind" to "Oh Shit!", it's pop with razors from love's finest punky chroniclers.

**Standout track:** "What Do I Get?"



### THE CARS

**The Cars**

ELEKTRA, 1978

Boston's Cars became an instant smash with their chrome-plated debut. Ric Ocasek's songs offered crisp, catchy snapshots of alienation and romantic distress, all given a smart New Wave sheen by the band's edgy beats and electronic keyboards.

**Standout track:** "My Best Friend's Girl"



### CHEMICAL BROTHERS

**Dig Your Own Hole**

ASTRALWERKS, 1997

Their 1997 Grammy for Best Rock Instrumental proved that no one makes electronica like this British pair. "Block Rockin' Beats" and "Setting Sun" harnessed the most powerful elements of rock and made them deliciously danceable.

**Standout track:** "Block Rockin' Beats"



### THE CLASH

**The Clash**

CBS, 1977

The definitive U.K. punk album, the Clash's debut was initially denied a U.S. release on account of its lo-fi production. Its roughness, however, was an integral part of its appeal — along with the quartet's mix of rock attitude and politicized anger.

**Standout track:** "Career Opportunities"



### THE CLASH

**London Calling**

EPIC, 1979

The Clash could have been just another crash-and-burn class-of-'77 outfit, but the two-album set *London Calling* changed everything. Cruising artfully through punk, reggae and all-out rock, it cinched their status as "the only band who mattered."

**Standout track:** "London Calling"



### COLDPLAY

**A Rush of Blood to the Head**

CAPITOL, 2002

Sensitive, Radiohead-fixed Englishmen, Coldplay found their own niche with their sterling second album. Crammed with exquisite ballads and emotive rock, it surely helped singer Chris Martin thaw Gwyneth Paltrow's heart.

**Standout track:** "The Scientist"



### ELVIS COSTELLO

**This Year's Model**

RHINO, 1978

Costello's bilious lyrics on this benchmark of disgust and unrepentant rage are aimed primarily at the fairer sex, and he lands a dizzying array of verbal body blows, augmented by bludgeoning musical support from the uncredited Attractions.

**Standout track:** "Pump It Up"



### ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRactions

**Armed Forces**

RHINO, 1979

Originally titled *Emotional Fascism*, EC's third album refines the pop stylings of *This Year's Model* and ratchets up the lyrical heat. Bristling with takes on right-wingers, newscasters and office politics.

**Standout track:** "Oliver's Army"



### MARSHALL CRENSHAW

**This Is Easy: The Best of Marshall Crenshaw**

RHINO, 2000

Casting Crenshaw as Buddy Holly in the film *La Bamba* was inspired. The Detroit native was the Holly of the '80s, writing pretty yet invariably punchy pop gems.

**Standout track:** "You're My Favorite Waste of Time"



### THE CURE

**Greatest Hits**

ELEKTRA, 2001

Eighteen songs over 23 years, from the post-punk benchmarks ("Boys Don't Cry") and Eurodisco ("The Walk") to melancholy passion plays ("Lovesong") and '90s hits ("Friday I'm in Love"), this is the perfect introduction to Robert Smith and the Cure's pop mockery.

**Standout track:** "Just Like Heaven"



### DEPECHE MODE

**The Singles '86-'98**

REPRISE, 1998

Depeche Mode's Sturm und Drang showed that fey English boys with keyboards really could seduce stadiums full of fans. Their songwriting skills oscillated wildly, but this singles collection shows the band at its brooding best.

**Standout track:** "I Feel You"



### DEVO

**Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo!**

WARNER BROS., 1978

Akron, Ohio's Devo wore uniforms and sang strange tales of weird sex and unsettling events with a childlike charm. The whole package comes together on this debut with a panache Devo would never re-create.

**Standout track:** "Jocko Homo"

## THE BEST OF

## GRUNGE



The bastard spawn of punk and metal that remade rock in the '90s

### HOLE

**Live Through This**

GEFFEN, 1994

Released within days of Kurt Cobain's suicide, widow Courtney Love's *Live Through This* would have been potent, poignant and damn near perfect even without his passing.

**Standout track:** "Doll Parts"

### NIRVANA

**Nevermind**

GEFFEN, 1991

A twisted wit, a contempt for the global megamall and tunes part Black Sabbath, part Beatles: It wouldn't be fair to ask for more from an album.

**Standout track:** "Smells Like Teen Spirit"

### NIRVANA

**In Utero**

GEFFEN, 1993

Welcome to Kurt's world of hurt: underproduced recordings and classic, confessional pop songs interspersed with throat-rupturing howls of pain.

**Standout track:** "Pennyroyal Tea"

### NIRVANA

**Unplugged in New York**

GEFFEN, 1994

Seven months after Kurt Cobain's suicide came this acoustic album that cemented his stature as an iconic singer-songwriter and a brilliant interpreter of rock history.

**Standout track:** "All Apologies"

### PEARL JAM

**Ten**

EPIC, 1991

Nirvana defined grunge, but *Ten* may well be the genre's best album, aided and abetted by former surfer Eddie Vedder's marvelously emotional voice.

**Standout track:** "Jeremy"

### PEARL JAM

**Vs.**

EPIC, 1993

Reacting against the meticulous crafting of *Ten*, Pearl Jam aim for, and achieve, an engagingly ragged spontaneity on *Vs.*

**Standout track:** "Daughter"

### SOUNDGARDEN

**Superunknown**

A&M, 1994

The meeting point for grungy Gen X-ers and '70s Zep acolytes, this is Soundgarden's most diverse and beguiling set.

**Standout track:** "Black Hole Sun"

From left: Lynda Churlila/Corbis Outlines; Youri Lenquoette/Retna Ltd

# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Alternative Rock



## DJ SHADOW

### Endtroducing ...

FULL FREQUENCY, 1996

Shadow's meticulous, sample-based project introduced us to the movies inside the reclusive record collector's head. Elegantly hard-hitting, it revolutionized instrumental hip-hop by showing new worlds where samples and beats told their own stories. **Standout track:** "Midnight in a Perfect World"



## DURAN DURAN

### Greatest

CAPITOL, 1998

A lethal combination of Andy Warhol enthusiasts and beefy lads who figured a rock career could be the swiftest route into a model's pants, Duran Duran morphed from swishy synth-pop into video-assisted blockbusters. The sound of Reagan-omics. **Standout track:** "Hungry Like the Wolf"



## ENGLISH BEAT

### Beat This!: The Best of the English Beat

SIRE, 2000

Fans of ska-punk are hereby advised to go back to one of its wellsprings: the work of the U.K. band who fused a love of Jamaican music and punk's iconoclastic intent with a striking talent for commercial pop. **Standout track:** "Mirror in the Bathroom"



## BRIAN ENO

### Here Come the Warm Jets

ISLAND, 1974

Brian Eno's second post-Roxy Music album remains his best pop effort. His experimental touch turns basic glam-rock into something sick and sinister. The free-associating, posh-voiced vocals are an acquired taste, but there's method in this madness. **Standout track:** "Baby's On Fire"



## BRIAN ENO

### Another Green World

EG, 1975

Art-pop ballads sung in Eno's weirdly affecting deadpan nestle alongside abstract instrumentals that presage his ambient years. Experimental yet accessible, it's exactly the kind of album that Eno devotees long for from him today. **Standout track:** "Over Fire Island"



## FATBOY SLIM

### You've Come a Long Way, Baby

ASTRALWERKS, 1998

Techno with the fun turned up to 11. On his second album as Fatboy Slim, England's Norman Cook discovered that the sunnier the tunes, the more people danced. The bubblegum hooks and crunchy riffs made it safe for wallflowers. **Standout track:** "Praise You"



## THE FEELIES

### Crazy Rhythms

ASB, 1980

This New Jersey quartet never broke through, but it did leave us a sterling legacy of pop as sugarcoated icebergs: sweet and sticky as early Beatles on top; as dark and weird as the Velvet Underground beneath. If only they hadn't been quite so smart... **Standout track:** "Loveless Love"



## GANG OF FOUR

### Entertainment!

INFINITE ZERO, 1979

Throwing down the post-punk gauntlet, Gang of Four's debut is a powder keg full of paradoxes: Chilly vocals and jagged shards of guitar keep you at a shivering distance, while Marxist lyrics and a deep-groovin' rhythm section provoke both action and reaction. **Standout track:** "Anthrax"



## GO-GO'S

### Beauty and the Beat

U.S.S., 1981

L.A. punk meets cute pop in the hands of a quintet of very lively young ladies. New Wave landmarks bursting with melody and mischief, the propulsive "We Got the Beat" and the slinky "Our Lips Are Sealed" still bristle with about masturbation. **Standout track:** "Our Lips Are Sealed"



## GREEN DAY

### Dookie

REPRISE, 1994

Without this, there would be no Sum 41. But don't hold that against Green Day: Their major-label debut remains an invigorating, clever update of punk's obsession with adolescent frustration. Naturally, in "Longview," it spawned a hit song about masturbation. **Standout track:** "Basket Case"



## PJ HARVEY

### Rid of Me

ISLAND, 1993

In the wake of her 1992 debut, *Dry*, England's Polly Harvey could easily have edged toward the mainstream. Instead, in cahoots with producer Steve Albini, her band created a tempestuous follow-up that proved she was a fantastically singular talent. **Standout track:** "Rid of Me"

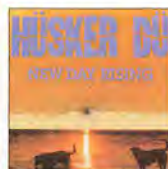


## PJ HARVEY

### To Bring You My Love

ISLAND, 1995

Having broken up her original powerhouse trio, Harvey produced what to date has proved her masterpiece. Spaghetti-western inflections ("Send His Love to Me") sit back-to-back with country laments ("C'mon Billy") and dark murder-pop ("Down by the Water"). **Standout track:** "C'mon Billy"



## HÜSKER DÜ

### New Day Rising

SST, 1985

Initially, Minneapolis's Hüsker Dü were pure hardcore noise, until *Zen Arcade* and then *New Day Rising* showed their burgeoning interest in hooks and melody. Magnificently, this only served to add to the intensity. Bob Mould has more space to howl here, and he uses it all. **Standout track:** "I Apologize"



## JANE'S ADDICTION

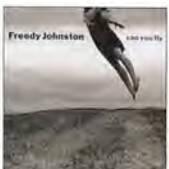
### Nothing's Shocking

WARNER BROS., 1988

Wildly pretentious art-metal rising out of the ashes of L.A. glitter rock, *Nothing's Shocking* layers prog-rock ambitions, druggy ballads and arena-ready riffs over punk shock tactics and Perry Farrell's drama-queen wail. Sound exhausting? It is. **Standout track:** "Jane Says"



Kraftwerk: "Düsseldorf, we have a problem."



## FREDDY JOHNSTON

### Can You Fly

BAR/NONE, 1992

A mouthpiece of reason for the X Generation, Freddy Johnston sang of the dazed and confused with a decided alt-country twist. He rarely provides answers here, but it doesn't matter: With his ragged voice and crafty melodies, *Can You Fly* still rings true. **Standout track:** "Responsible"



## JOY DIVISION

### Closer

QWEST, 1980

The title rhymes with *bulldozer*, and the morbid Brit post-punkers' graceful final album sees arachnid synths augmenting pitiless guitars and drums. Ian Curtis does a fine impression of a man abandoned by everyone, including God. Interpol think they sound like this. **Standout track:** "Isolation"



## KORN

### Follow the Leader

IMMORTAL/EPIC, 1998

On their third and breakthrough outing, over subtle refinements to their pile-driving death metal, frontman Jonathan Davis fashions an impressive kaleidoscope of vocal styles ranging from rap to scat and even proper singing. **Standout track:** "Dead Bodies Everywhere"



## KRAFTWERK

### Autobahn

PHILIPS, 1974

This marks the start of Kraftwerk's reign as electronic visionaries, as proved beyond doubt by the 22-minute title track, which suggests the Beach Boys reinterpreted by European man-machines. After this album, guitar manufacturers really had something to worry about. **Standout track:** "Autobahn"



**KRAFTWERK**  
**Trans-Europe Express**

CAPITOL, 1977

*Radio-Activity* (1975) was a difficult effort, but Kraftwerk got back on track with *Trans-Europe Express*. Afrika Bambaataa's appropriation of the title track made it legendary, but it's equally notable for the entrancing "Europe Endless." **Standout track:** "Trans-Europe Express"



**LOS LOBOS**  
**How Will the Wolf Survive?**

SLASH/WARNER BROS., 1984

This former bar band from East L.A. was the biggest Hispanic rock act since Santana, but they drew inspiration from the Tex-Mex border, not the Spanish Caribbean. Songs and togetherness rather than jams and partying down were their vibe. **Standout track:** "Will the Wolf Survive?"



**LOVE**  
**Forever Changes (2001 Deluxe Edition)**

RHINO, 2001

Nineteen sixty-seven certainly wasn't the summer of love. Los Angeles's Arthur Lee was your captain here for a surreal, black-magic carpet ride through the paranoid underbelly of hippiedom. Warped and lovely. **Standout track:** "Alone Again Or"



**NICK LOWE**  
**Basher: The Best of Nick Lowe**

COLUMBIA, 1989

Branded a punk godfather for his mordant lyrics, Lowe was really a proto-rock & roller, sharing more with the Everly Brothers than with Johnny Rotten. Most of this vibrant compilation comes from the late '70s, with his songwriting genius in full flower. **Standout track:** "Cruel to Be Kind"



**MAGNETIC FIELDS**  
**69 Love Songs**

MERGE, 1999

A stately indie-pop trilogy that views romance from every angle. Funny and fey, self-pitying and literate — "The moon to whom the poets croon/Has given up and died/Astronomy will have to be revised" — it's an enormous achievement. **Standout track:** "All My Little Words"



**MASSIVE ATTACK**  
**Blue Lines**

VIRGIN, 1991

With this debut, the Bristol, England, trio and guests made a trip-hop classic before the term even existed. Dub bass lines, paranoid rapping and the lush vocals of Horace Andy and Shara Nelson make this a cross-cultural, downbeat treat. **Standout track:** "Unfinished Symphony"



**MEAT PUPPETS**  
**Meat Puppets II**

SST, 1984

*Meat Puppets II* is an American guitar melting pot — bluegrass, choogle, folk and hardcore — that helped build the bridge between the indie-rock underground and the rock mainstream. No wonder Nirvana covered three tracks on their *Unplugged* set. **Standout track:** "Lake of Fire"



**MEKONS**  
**The Mekons Rock N' Roll**

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE, 1989

On their major-label debut, England's folk-punk Mekons embrace rock & roll. The erstwhile minimalists seem shocked at what they find, but they succumb to its scale in a festival of power drumming, power fiddling and mordant ambivalence. **Standout track:** "Memphis, Egypt"



**MINOR THREAT**  
**Complete Discography**

DISCHORD, 1988

Their hardcore racket was loud, their mood angry and their songs short. Washington, D.C.'s Minor Threat appeared to have consumed their body weight in stimulants. In fact, the straight-edge movement was named after a Minor Threat tune. **Standout track:** "Straight Edge"



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## THE BEST OF

### PROTO-PUNK



We don't need no stinkin' safety pins!

#### THE MC5 The Big Bang: The Best of the MC5

RHINO, 2000  
The single finest distillation of this radical Detroit band's explosive energy. **Standout track:** "Kick Out the Jams (Uncensored Version)"

#### THE MODERN LOVERS The Modern Lovers

RHINO, 1976  
This proto-punk classic produced mostly by John Cale introduces Jonathan Richman as the needy geek with a faux-naïve slant on love, life and the teen thang. **Standout track:** "Roadrunner"

#### NEW YORK DOLLS New York Dolls

MERCURY, 1973  
A motley crew of ugly dudes dressed like Times Square hookers created a car crash of dirty riffs and death-wish dreams that turned rock & roll on its head and kicked open the door of the New York punk scene. Glam never sounded so toxic. **Standout track:** "Personality Crisis"

#### THE STOOGES Raw Power

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1973  
Befriended (and then produced) by David Bowie, Iggy Pop and the Stooges unleash their best set of breakneck performances. **Standout track:** "Search & Destroy"

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS Nuggets From Nuggets: Choice Artyfacts From the First Psychedelic Era 1965-1968

RHINO, 1998  
In 1972, Lenny Kaye's two-LP compilation of trashy classics inspired a garage-rock revival. The digital era brought a four-CD box set of the concept, but this 20-tracker is truer to the aims of the original. **Standout track:** The 13th Floor Elevators, "You're Gonna Miss Me"

#### THE VELVET UNDERGROUND Peel Slowly & See (Box Set)

POLYDOR, 1995  
Hard-bitten Velvet fans will always want that extra rarity, but for most, these five CDs will suffice. **Standout track:** "I'm Waiting for the Man"



#### MINUTEMEN Double Nickels On the Dime

SST, 1984  
The California trio's 44-song masterpiece mixes hardcore, jazz and funk, pushing American punk a step further. Switching styles at any given moment, their deadly serious approach is leavened by pokes at Michael Jackson and Ronald Reagan. **Standout track:** "This Ain't No Picnic"



#### MOBY Play

V2, 1999  
Techno baldie Moby genre-hopped for years before he finally found his niche here. By uniting ancient, sorrowful blues vocals with chilled dance beats, he created a soulful soundtrack for millions of lives — and just as many commercials. **Standout track:** "Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad?"



#### ALANIS MORISSETTE Jagged Little Pill

MAVERICK/REPRISE, 1996  
A fierce examination of the modern female condition by — strangely enough — an ex-Debbie Gibson clone from Canada. That she manages to transcend such origins and sound convincing is only part of her monumental achievement. **Standout track:** "You Oughta Know"

## ARTISTS' PICKS: Pete Dinklage

### → RIDE Nowhere

SIRE, 1990

"'Vapour Trail' changed my life. I was driving to a Bob Mould concert with two girls when I was a sophomore. I made 'em play it six times in a row."



#### MY BLOODY VALENTINE Loveless

SIRE, 1991  
A crashing, joyous celebration of what happens when amplifiers seemingly create art of their own. But making guitars sound like butterflies and icebergs had its price: *Loveless* bankrupted its U.K. label and proved impossible for these Dubliners to follow. **Standout track:** "I Only Said"



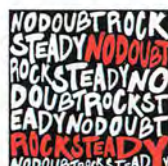
#### NEW ORDER (The Best of) New Order

QWEST/WARNER BROS., 1995  
Rather than as a one-stop shop, use this disc as a springboard for further investigation into one of pop's greatest catalogs. Rising from the ashes of Joy Division, New Order united New Wave and dance with spring-heeled success. **Standout track:** "True Faith"



#### NINE INCH NAILS The Downward Spiral

NOTHING/INTERSCOPE, 1994  
Trent Reznor's death-dance soundscapes tap into alienation and fury in equal measure. The music may be as clinical as an operating room, but in tandem with the S&M lyrics, it makes for a work that still feels dangerous. **Standout track:** "Closer"



#### NO DOUBT Rock Steady

INTERSCOPE, 2001  
No Doubt prove their staying power by becoming sophisticated polymaths. Gwen Stefani — Jean Harlow on a skateboard — is as loveable as ever, but of equal charm are her bandmates, who master spongy reggae, twitchy New Wave and Top 40 dance-pop. **Standout track:** "Hey Baby"



#### OASIS (What's the Story) Morning Glory?

EPIC, 1995  
Their musical standards have slipped ever since, but Oasis's second album proves that they once had the right stuff: wall-of-sound guitars, awesome rock & roll vocals, and no hesitation about borrowing the best bits of rock's canon. **Standout track:** "Wonderwall"



#### SINÉAD O'CONNOR So Far... The Best of Sinéad O'Connor

CAPITOL, 1997  
Her near-perfect cover of Prince's "Nothing Compares 2 U" casts a long shadow, but her broad talent also gave rise to the punky "Mandinka" and a straight version of "Don't Cry for Me Argentina." **Standout track:** "Nothing Compares 2 U"



No Doubt: Just remember not to drop the soap!



#### PAVEMENT Slanted and Enchanted

MATADOR, 1992  
Sonic Youth set the tone for American indie-rock in the '90s, but Pavement focused that fuzz into pop songs you could hum all the way home. They made irony sound sincere, and proved that guitar bands could be samplers too. **Standout track:** "Summer Babe (Winter Version)"



#### PAVEMENT Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain

MATADOR, 1994  
Throwing off the Fall comparisons, Pavement seem prematurely jaded ("Cut Your Hair," "Range Life" and "Gold Soundz" all address the music industry), while their sound whoops it up, taking ever more eclectic shapes. Oh, the irony. **Standout track:** "Cut Your Hair"



### PET SHOP BOYS

#### Discography: The Complete Singles Collection

EMI/AMERICA, 1991

Understatedly camp and sophisticatedly danceable, English duo Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe convey urban romance in a deadpan verse, an aching chorus and an arched eyebrow. **Standout track:** "It's a Sin"



### PIXIES

#### Doolittle

4AD/ELEKTRA, 1989

It took a couple of tries to get the Pixies' mix of surf riffs, cryptic poetics, off-kilter rhythms and power-chord surges just right, but on *Doolittle* everything came together like it never would again. A touchstone of the American indie-rock underground. **Standout track:** "Monkey Gone to Heaven"



### THE POLICE

#### Outlandos D'Amour

A&M, 1978

Three classy prog and jazz-rock musicians grapple punk and reggae, and win. Their fighting friendship produces terrific, spacious trio dynamics splattered with raging frustration. All this and one of rock's finest monologues about a blowup sex doll. **Standout track:** "Roxanne"



### PET SHOP BOYS

#### Very

CAPITOL, 1993

Here they are: the Smiths you can dance to, with their most thoughtfully upbeat album yet. Songs about Princess Diana ("Dreaming of the Queen") and touring ("Yesterday When I Was Mad"), plus a yearning scope of the Village People's "Go West." **Standout track:** "Go West"



### PIXIES

#### Bossanova

4AD/ELEKTRA, 1990

The indie titans' third proper album, and the most reflective of songwriter Black Francis's West Coast surf rock, *Bossanova* comes on like a David Lynch version of a sci-fi B-movie: all fetish girls and alien abductions. It's no *Doolittle*, but then again, few records are. **Standout track:** "Dig for Fire"



### THE POLICE

#### Zenyatta Mondatta

A&M, 1980

White-boy reggae that works. From throwaway pop ("De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da") to political sloganeering ("Driven to Tears"), the Police show here that they can do both equally effectively, thanks in no small part to Sting's sensational voice. **Standout track:** "Don't Stand So Close to Me"



### LIZ PHAIR

#### Exile in Guyville

MATADOR, 1993

Phair's debut was intended as a song-by-song riposte to the Stones' *Exile on Main Street*. The concept isn't fully realized, but the ambition and intelligence it implies give rise to a startling record, boosted by both its admirable musical scope and taboo-busting lyrics. **Standout track:** "Never Said"



### THE POGUES

#### Rum, Sodomy & the Lash

WARNER BROS., 1985

This booze-fueled folk-rock band was once one of the planet's wildest live acts. Producer Elvis Costello not only captures the madness on disc but showcases singer Shane MacGowan's songs of desperate romance. Then marries the bassist. **Standout track:** "A Pair of Brown Eyes"



### PRETENDERS

#### Pretenders

SIRE, 1979

Ohio's Chrissie Hynde was part of the same London circle as the Sex Pistols, but her band's debut proved she was no punk. The Pretenders' calling card was a new kind of classic rock: virtuosic, deeply commercial and full of Hynde's alluring sass. **Standout track:** "Brass in Pocket"



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**PRETENDERS**  
Learning to Crawl  
SIRE, 1984  
It was always a struggle between Hynde the leathery rocker and Chrissie the siren of heart-break. On their third album, she achieves a fine balance, song after song hitting where you live. Posterity might settle for the soft center over the hard nut. **Standout track:** "Middle of the Road"



**THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS**  
Talk Talk Talk  
COLUMBIA, 1981  
Richard Butler would soon move to New York, and on this, the Furs' second album, the Brit's Americanization begins. Includes plenty of sexual energy ("Into You Like a Train," indeed) and lyrical dexterity ("Pretty in Pink"). **Standout track:** "Pretty in Pink"

## ARTISTS' PICKS: Wayne Coyne, the Flaming Lips

→ **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
The Story & Songs of The Wizard of Oz  
RHINO, 1998

"The sentiment is sincere; it's fantastical yet really human. And 'Over the Rainbow' is the real deal. Magical."



**RADIOHEAD**  
The Bends  
CAPITOL, 1995  
"Creep" had turned them into a 10-legged karaoke machine, but *The Bends* showed that Radiohead were in it for the long haul. Thom Yorke's paranoid, anti-modern worldview dominated, especially in the rattling title track and the plaintive beauty of "Fake Plastic Trees." **Standout track:** "Fake Plastic Trees"



**RADIOHEAD**  
OK Computer  
CAPITOL, 1997  
The world still hopes they can match it, but Radiohead's third album left '90s guitar rock behind three years before the new decade. By turns angry, paranoid and stunningly beautiful, it's a masterpiece capable of competing with rock's greatest moments. **Standout track:** "Karma Police"



**RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**  
Evil Empire  
EPIC, 1996  
A very, very angry album indeed from a band of Los Angeles oddballs dedicated to holding up a mirror to America while rocking like bastards. An odd combination, like Jell-O and burgers, but it's amazingly potent all the same. Listen with a straitjacket. **Standout track:** "Bulls On Parade"



**RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS**  
Blood Sugar Sex Magik  
WARNER BROS., 1991  
Where the oncemerry pranksters move into something more interesting than whitey funk. Flea's twanging bass still abounds, but here it's allied to real songs, and suddenly the band outgrows its socks-on-cocks persona. **Standout track:** "Under the Bridge"



**LOU REED**  
Legendary  
BMG INTERNATIONAL, 2002  
Exhaustive overview of the former Louis Firbank, the quirks (not enough *Berlin*, but the wretched "I Love You Suzanne" is here) outweighed by the itchy delights. As one of Reed's fellow New Yorkers once noted, too much of a good thing can be wonderful. **Standout track:** "Perfect Day"



**PULP**  
Different Class  
ISLAND, 1995  
Parochial English pop's mid-'90s heyday offered a batch of records obsessed with social class. Pulp's was the funniest, on which single mothers and rich slummers interact against a shabby backdrop of thrift-store glam-pop. Strangely, still compelling. **Standout track:** "Common People"



**QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE**  
Rated R  
INTERSCOPE, 2000  
An opening song that listed favored drugs was bound to cause a stir, but *Rated R* is more than a cheap gag. Expansive and even fuzzily mellow at times, the motto here is "people who mash their brains will sometimes make great music." **Standout track:** "Feel Good Hit of the Summer"



**STEVE REICH**  
Music for 18 Musicians  
RCA, 1978  
With its shimmering waves of strings, marimbas, vocals and clarinets, the rhythmically intoxicating *Music for 18 Musicians* sounds more like art-rock than avant-garde classical music. Radical in its day, it influenced Brian Eno and put minimalism on the map. **Standout track:** "Pulses"



**R.E.M.**  
Murmur  
I.R.S., 1983  
Embracing the Byrds' jangle until it became as blurry as the album's cover and aping Patti Smith's poetic punk vision, R.E.M.'s impossibly enigmatic debut effectively spawned college rock. While remaining of its time, it has aged impressively well. **Standout track:** "Radio Free Europe"



Rage Against the Machine: "Eek, a spider!"



**R.E.M.**  
Document  
I.R.S., 1987  
The first indication that R.E.M. were mainstream contenders, particularly with the Dylan-cribbing "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" and the out-and-out pop of "The One I Love." Their breakthrough. **Standout track:** "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)"



**R.E.M.**  
Automatic for the People  
WARNER BROS., 1992  
Twinned with its predecessor, *Out of Time*, this shows the foursome peaking mid-career with lush tunes long on reflection, Andy Kaufman name-checks and half-submerged hooks that grab the thinking rocker's sensitive underbelly. **Standout track:** "Man On the Moon"



**THE REPLACEMENTS**  
Let It Be  
TWIN/TONE, 1984  
College rawk (a poker-faced Kiss cover) plus college rock (cue mandolins), plus Paul Westerberg embracing the fact that misery loves melody: 11 songs that seemed destined to fill up a stadium. Scandalously, it never happened. **Standout track:** "I Will Dare"

From top: Bernd Ott/Camera Press/Reina Ltd.; Jay Blakesberg/Reina Ltd.



**TERRY RILEY**  
In C

CBS, 1968

An ensemble of musicians weaves through 53 cyclic repetitions, creating a spontaneous pulse lasting 42 minutes. This pioneering piece of minimalism resurfaced in the synthesizer loop driving the Who's "Baba O'Riley" and hovers above today's techno. **Standout track:** It's all one track



... then the Smiths opened a florist's shop and lived happily ever after.



**ROXY MUSIC**  
Avalon

WARNER BROS., 1982

The reconvened Roxy Music of the early '80s were far removed from the art-school dilettantes of Brian Eno's day. But their later music had its own languorous, sexy, exquisite melancholy. *Avalon* is the acme of this style, and practically removes brassieres by itself. **Standout track:** "More Than This"



**ROXY MUSIC**  
The Best of Roxy Music

VIRGIN, 2001

Stitching together their two careers — '70s art-rockers, dapper '80s pop band — this cleverly runs the songs in reverse chronological order: Bryan Ferry and band begin as chart-friendly lounge lizards before slowly and wonderfully weirding out. **Standout track:** "Virginia Plain"



**SEX PISTOLS**  
Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols

WARNER BROS., 1977

Ferocious, sneering anger seeps through every minute of this cast-iron classic. It's not musically innovative — the pub-rock roots of Steve Jones's guitar playing are plain — but Johnny Rotten's spiteful vocals still inspire fear. **Standout track:** "Anarchy in the U.K."



**SLAYER**  
Reign in Blood

DEF AMERICAN, 1986

Bile spews out at ferocious speed, which was just the way these heshers wanted it. Produced by Rick Rubin for maximum noise and maximum shock value, it achieved its aim with ruthless efficiency. For moments when you want a musical assault course. **Standout track:** "Angel of Death"



**SLEATER-KINNEY**  
Dig Me Out

KILL ROCK STARS, 1997

This post-riot grrrr Olympia, Washington, trio delivers vital, mood-swinging guitars plus lovelorn indie-girl fretting par excellence. And it's that spoonful of New Wave sugar that helps the gender-agenda medicine go down. **Standout track:** "Words & Guitar"



**THE SMASHING PUMPKINS**  
Greatest Hits

VIRGIN, 2001

On an album as expansive as *Mellon Collie & the Infinite Sadness*, the Pumpkins' gothic neo-prog rock paled. Here, however, they're delightfully accessible, helped by Billy Corgan's underrated ability to write accomplished pop music. **Standout track:** "1979"



**THE SMITHS**  
Singles

REPRISE, 1995

Arguably the greatest British singles band of the '80s. From the sublime ("How Soon Is Now?") to the faintly ridiculous ("There Is a Light That Never Goes Out"), these 45s remain some of the most intoxicating and original songs committed to vinyl. **Standout track:** "How Soon Is Now?"



**SONIC YOUTH**  
Daydream Nation

GEFFEN, 1988

The crucial transition for the still-insular New York outfit: the point at which melodies coalesce amid the primordial noise of the Lee Ranaldo/Thurston Moore guitar assault, and sex shimmers in the shadows of Kim Gordon's bass throb. **Standout track:** "Teen Age Riot"



**SONIC YOUTH**  
Dirty

GEFFEN, 1992

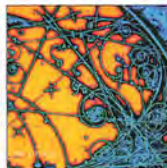
With shorter songs, punchier riffs and production from *Nevermind*'s Butch Vig, *Dirty* found New York's artiest dealing with the alt-rock scene they fathered while trying to be a part of it. An enthusiastic grope at commercial success, and as grungy as they got. **Standout track:** "Sugar Kane"



**THE SPECIALS**  
Singles

2-TONE/CHRYSALIS, 1991

In the wake of the Clash's punk-reggae fusion, these fellow Brits prove that the combination is a winner. Lyrically, they bemoan England's late-'70s drabness. Strange, then, that they were the inspiration for the happy-happy late-'90s ska craze. **Standout track:** "Ghost Town"



**THE STROKES**  
Is This It

RCA, 2001

They look so right, it's almost a surprise to discover that New York's future (and past) of rock sound just as good. Angular riffs, lo-fi production and Julian Casablancas's studiously bored vocals make for a short, spiky, brilliant debut. Their imitators are already among us. **Standout track:** "Hard to Explain"



**SYSTEM OF A DOWN**  
Toxicity

AMERICAN, 2001

Serj Tankian, surely one of rock's most extraordinary voices, is just one of many reasons why these Armenian-Americans soar above their n-metal contemporaries. *Toxicity* sets standards of musicianship, depth of thought and political awareness. **Standout track:** "Chop Suey!"

THE BEST OF

DOWNTOWN NEW YORK



Punk and New Wave the CBGB way

**BLONDIE**  
Parallel Lines

CHRYSALIS, 1978

A breakthrough fusion of pop, punk and disco that sent the masses scrambling for skinny ties. **Standout track:** "Sunday Girl"

**THE RAMONES**  
The Ramones

SIRE, 1976

The non-related New Yorkers invent punk and use the Archies to do it. And wotta singer. **Standout track:** "Blitzkrieg Bop"

**THE RAMONES**  
Leave Home

SIRE, 1977

Punk Beach Boys approximating Phil Spector's Wall of Sound with volume and speed. Punk rock doesn't get any better. **Standout track:** "Sheena Is a Punk Rocker"

**THE RAMONES**  
Rocket to Russia

SIRE, 1977

Fourteen turbocharged tunes that roar through the speakers and stick like glue. **Standout track:** "Rockaway Beach"

**PATTI SMITH**  
Horses

ARISTA, 1975

Bolting beatnik book-learning onto skinny New York loft-rock: a dawn-of-punk revelation. **Standout track:** "Free Money"

**TALKING HEADS**  
More Songs About Buildings & Food

SIRE, 1978

Love, friendship, a job, girls, his country: Each fills singer David Byrne with anxiety. His suspicious yelps are grounded by the warm humanism of the music's itchy funk. **Standout track:** "The Big Country"

**TALKING HEADS**  
Remain in Light

SIRE, 1980

Where David Byrne and Brian Eno begin to add an African tinge to what was still the tightest and smartest band of its era. **Standout track:** "Once in a Lifetime"

**TELEVISION**  
Marquee Moon

ELEKTRA, 1977

Uniting the Velvet Underground and the Grateful Dead, leader Tom Verlaine and henchman Richard Lloyd excel at ecstatic two-guitar excursions. **Standout track:** "Marquee Moon"

# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Alternative Rock



**TRICKY**  
**Maxinquaye**  
POLYGRAM, 1995  
Brooding trip-hop from its finest practitioner. The whispered "Hell Is Around the Corner" succeeds in being both soothing and unsettling, while the propulsive cover of Public Enemy's "Black Steel" twists the original into something thrilling and unrecognizable. **Standout track:** "Black Steel"



**U2**  
**Boy**  
ISLAND, 1980  
U2's debut still bursts out of the speakers with vitality and originality, twinning the Edge's minimalist guitar figures with Bono's shamelessly impassioned vocals. Wide-eyed wonder and skyscraping ambition: In many ways, U2 would never stray far from Boy's blueprint. **Standout track:** "I Will Follow"



**U2**  
**The Joshua Tree**  
ISLAND, 1987  
Their first American chart-topper saw U2 slide away from chest-beating toward softened atmospheres and worldly politics. That there is no "best" U2 album is to their credit, yet *The Joshua Tree* is an anchor for a band who remain engagingly adrift. **Standout track:** "With or Without You"



**U2**  
**Achtung Baby**  
ISLAND, 1997  
Or: how U2 got modern. Ditching their obsession with Americana to embrace European electronic and dance vibes should have been embarrassing for Bono and crew. But not a bit of it is. Beautifully produced by Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno, it's an inspiring mid-career shift. **Standout track:** "One"



**U2**  
**All That You Can't Leave Behind**  
INTERSCOPE, 2000  
With this album's predecessor, *Pop*, U2 started sliding down to the recesses of their own irony, a trip their fans hesitated to share. Here U2 successfully re-apply for their old jobs with their most sincerely uplifting album. **Standout track:** "Beautiful Day"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**24 Hour Party People — Original Soundtrack**  
RHINO, 2002  
From 1977, Manchester was Britain's most significant musical wellspring, and this soundtrack takes in both the local legends and the stuff that inspired them. **Standout track:** Joy Division, "Love Will Tear Us Apart"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**The Best Bootlegs in the World Ever**  
NO LABEL, 2002  
Bedroom PC pirates play Dr. Frankenstein, splicing pop vocals with instrumentals until Eminem fronts Depeche Mode, Beyoncé sings Nirvana and "Get Ur Freak On" turns metal. **Standout track:** Freeland Hellraiser, "A Stroke of Genius"



**VIOLENT FEMMES**  
**Violent Femmes**  
SLASH/RHINO, 1983  
Geeky on the outside, twisted but (sort of) religious on the inside, there was nobody quite like Milwaukee's Violent Femmes. Gordon Gano's whiny voice simply makes things stranger. Alas, they never bettered this tuneful debut, but what a start. **Standout track:** "Blister in the Sun"



**TOM WAITS**  
**Beautiful Maladies: The Island Years**  
ISLAND, 1998  
The world awaits a compilation bringing Waits's Island output together with his earlier Asylum period, but this illuminates most of the darker corners of the human psyche via his classic song-writing and avant-garde doodling. **Standout track:** "Downtown Train"



**WEEZER**  
**Weezer**  
Geffen, 1994  
Absolute geek-rock, out and proud. Mistakenly reviled by hipsters and critics at the time as mainstream Pavement, "the blue record" has become a touchstone for smart kids who had trouble talking to girls and loved power-pop guitars that played metal riffs for laughs. **Standout track:** "Buddy Holly"



**THE WHITE STRIPES**  
**White Blood Cells**  
SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY/V2, 2001  
Husband/wife preachers of the primal power of rock & roll, Jack and Meg White even thought a bass player unnecessary, and the potency of this third album proves that three would have been a crowd. **Standout track:** "Fell in Love With a Girl"



**WILCO**  
**Summerteeth**  
REPRISE, 1999  
With 2002's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, Wilco took a sharp left turn, but its predecessor found them making more accessible music: melody-strewn delights that made reference to Big Star and the Beach Boys. It's arguably a shame that the fun didn't continue. **Standout track:** "I'm Always in Love"



**WIRE**  
**Pink Flag**  
RESTLESS, 1977  
Wire were the British pioneers of art-punk, and their angular, unsettling songs often did their work in little more than a minute. A quarter-century on, their debut still sounds contemporary: Those who adore the Strokes will find much to please them here. **Standout track:** "Three Girl Rhumba"



**X**  
**Wild Gift**  
SLASH, 1981  
On the Los Angeles punk band's seedy second album, junk-store poets Exene Cervenka and John Doe mine their relationship for perfect deadpan melodrama, set to a '65 Rolling Stones backbeat. Marital stress has never sounded so romantic. **Standout track:** "Beyond and Back"



**X-RAY SPEX**  
**Germ Free Adolescents**  
SANCTUARY, 1979  
Obsessed with the modern world and plastic in all its forms, Poly Styrene was one of punk's most intriguing bandleaders. X-Ray Spex back her witty, phlegm-laden singing here with British punk's most cartoony riffing. **Standout track:** "The Day the World Turned Day-Glo"



**XTC**  
**Fossil Fuel: The XTC Singles 1977-92**  
VIRGIN/EMI, 1996  
Although they emerged from the tumult of U.K. punk, XTC inherited a tradition of English eccentricity from the Kinks, early Pink Floyd and psychedelic-era Beatles. This cream of their output justifies such comparisons. **Standout track:** "Senses Working Overtime"



**YO LA TENGO**  
**Electr-O-Pura**  
MATADOR, 1995  
Yo La Tengo perfect epic indie-rock on *Electr-O-Pura*. Guitarist Ira Kaplan and his wife, drummer Georgia Hubley, had already demonstrated their pop chops, but here they build melodies into intense climaxes, ably aided by the occasional lyrical gem. **Standout track:** "Tom Courtenay"





**BOBBY "BLUE" BLAND**  
**The Anthology**  
 MCA, 2001  
 Though it spans 1952 to 1982 and thus misses Bland's Indian summer, *The Anthology* still gloriously celebrates Tennessee's finest voice. And what a voice: as comfortable with lascivious R&B as it is with white-bread MOR. **Standout track:** "I'm Too Far Gone (To Turn Around)"



**SON HOUSE**  
**Father of the Delta Blues: The Complete 1965 Sessions**  
 COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1965  
 Son House was the fountainhead of Delta blues. Made late in life but with talent undimmed, this showcases his strengths: plaintive singing and plangent slide playing on his National guitar. **Standout track:** "John the Revelator"



**CHARLIE PATTON**  
**King of the Delta Blues**  
 YAZOO, 1991  
 Easily as important as the more celebrated Robert Johnson, Patton is at his most presentable here, in a cleaned-up collection revealing the startling interplay between his hazy, godforsaken voice and spry, syncopated slide guitar. **Standout track:** "Peavine Blues"



**WILLIE DIXON**  
**The Chess Box (Box Set)**  
 CHESS/MCA, 1988  
 Dixon wrote so many classics, not even Led Zeppelin could steal them all. From Howlin' Wolf doing "Spoonful" to Muddy Waters giving life to "Hoochie Coochie Man," Dixon's best is the absolute cream of the Chicago blues. **Standout track:** "Howlin' Wolf, 'Back Door Man'"



**HOWLIN' WOLF**  
**His Best (The Chess 50th Anniversary Collection)**  
 CHESS/MCA, 1997  
 Howlin' Wolf was a mesmerizing force of nature. His menacing growl, punctuated by an unearthly wail and savage harmonica, spawned a sense of unholy ritual and influenced every blues-rocker worth hearing. **Standout track:** "Evil"



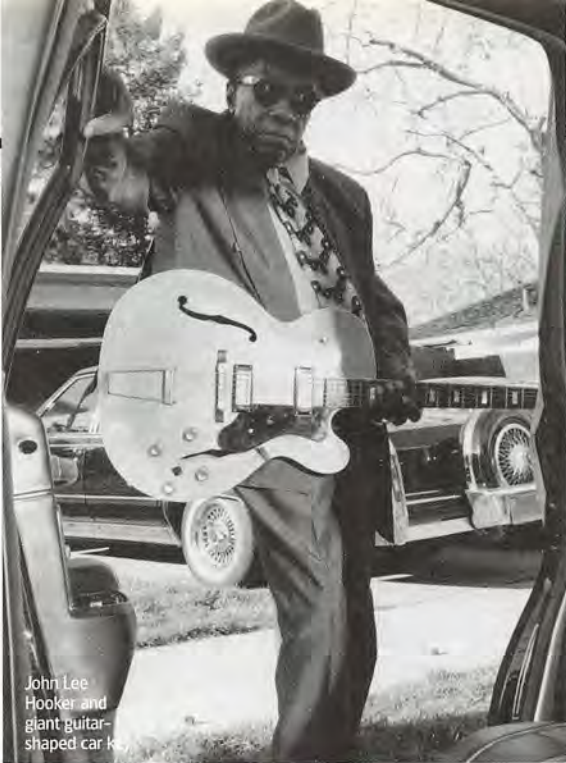
**BESSIE SMITH**  
**The Essential Bessie Smith**  
 COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1997  
 Other female artists may be more famous, but Bessie Smith was the first true great. While few '20s recordings stand repeated listening, the tremulous tones of the Empress of the Blues traverse the decades with ease. **Standout track:** "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out"



**JOHN LEE HOOKER**  
**The Ultimate Collection (1948-1990)**  
 RHINO, 1991  
 He's gone now, but play any track and old Hooker's there beside you, growling and sighing as he bends the blues from Mississippi to Detroit and then off into some unbound free-form dream of his own. **Standout track:** "Boom Boom"



**ELMORE JAMES**  
**The Sky Is Crying: The History of Elmore James**  
 RHINO, 1993  
 He was Robert Johnson's student, Rolling Stone Brian Jones's idol, and Eric Clapton has paid tribute to him. With "Dust My Broom," he coined the most copied slide-guitar lick in electric blues. **Standout track:** "Dust My Broom"



John Lee Hooker and giant guitar-shaped car



**ROBERT JOHNSON**  
**King of the Delta Blues Singers**  
 COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1966  
 The blues' sinful messiah. They say he sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his songwriting skills, his subtle guitar and the haunt and temptation in his voice. Herein, the myth made flesh. **Standout track:** "Hellhound On My Trail"



**B.B. KING**  
**Live at the Regal**  
 MCA, 1965  
 Riley "Blues Boy" King had been called "King of the Blues" for a dozen years when he gave the 1964 performance recorded here, yet the pathos and power that marked his live show make it seem as if it happened only yesterday. Now that's real blues. **Standout track:** "Woke Up This Mornin'"



**LEAD BELLY**  
**Where Did You Sleep Last Night: Lead Belly Legacy, Vol. 1**  
 SMITHSONIAN/FOLKWAYS, 1996  
 Lead Belly influenced everyone who has played rootsy American music. His songs, immaculately transferred from original masters, are immovable and comforting. **Standout track:** "Rock Island Line"

**ARTISTS' PICKS: Dallas Austin, Producer**

→ **BETTY DAVIS**  
**They Say I'm Different**  
 MPC, 1974  
 "Betty was Miles Davis's ex-wife. Jimi Hendrix and Sly Stone thought she was a trip and encouraged her to make records."



**MUDDY WATERS**  
**The Anthology: 1947-1972**  
 CHESS/MCA, 2001  
 This is what happened to the blues when they were transported from Mississippi to Chicago. Muddy Waters embodied the transition, and once in the Windy City, he authored some of the most hard-hitting music ever put to tape. **Standout track:** "I Can't Be Satisfied"

**THE BEST OF**

**FOLK**



It's not all sandals and patchouli, you know

**LEONARD COHEN**  
**The Essential Leonard Cohen**  
 COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2002  
 Sensitive love poetry and sepulchral gloom sung in a lugubrious rumble camouflaging a seductively wicked sense of humor. **Standout track:** "Tower of Song"

**NICK DRAKE**  
**Pink Moon**  
 HANNIBAL/RYKODISC, 1972  
 Drake's melancholy swan song is short and unforgettable. This elegiac one-man project is pure poetry. **Standout track:** "Which Will"

**FAIRPORT CONVENTION**  
**Meet On the Ledge: The Classic Years (1967-1975)**  
 A&M, 1999  
 Fairport Convention were folk artists in the truest sense, drawing on their kingdom's musical traditions for these modern madrigals. **Standout track:** "Walk Awhile"

**WOODY GUTHRIE**  
**Dustbowl Ballads**  
 ROUNDER, 1964  
 Woody Guthrie's folk style is musically threadbare, but emotionally it's rich, deep and satisfying. **Standout track:** "I Ain't Got No Home"

**JOHN PRINE**  
**Great Days: The John Prine Anthology**  
 RHINO, 1993  
 Prine's music inhabits a unique place, midway between country and folk. This collection brims with intelligence and emotion. **Standout track:** "Hello in There"

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Anthology of American Folk Music (Box Set)**  
 SMITHSONIAN/FOLKWAYS, 1997  
 The extraordinary life's work of musicologist Harry Smith reissued as a six-CD set. Indigenous roots music from the '20s and '30s — old-timey country, blues, Cajun and gospel, it's eclectic and astonishing. **Standout track:** Blind Lemon Jefferson, "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean"

# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Country



**GARTH BROOKS**  
**The Hits**

CAPITOL, 1994  
Cashing in on the country giant's unassailable status before his bizarre downfall, this is an unambiguous best-of, bulging with honey-voiced ballads and affable honky-tonking from the good-hearted (if bulky) boy next door. **Standout track:** "Friends in Low Places"



**THE CARTER FAMILY**  
**Wildwood Flower**

AS/LIVING ERA, 2000  
These 25 home-spun classics capture a time (1927-'38) when three bumpkins from Virginia could be superstars without compromising their roots. It's *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* for purists. **Standout track:** "Keep On the Sunny Side"



**JOHNNY CASH**  
**At Folsom Prison**

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1968  
Playing mean in front of men who probably *did* shoot a man in Reno just to watch him die is no mean feat, but the rhino-hidden troubadour somehow manages it. Just imagine the tear rolling from a lifer's eye when Cash plays "Green, Green Grass of Home." **Standout track:** "Cocaine Blues"



**JOHNNY CASH**  
**The Essential Johnny Cash**

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1992  
The back catalog of country's Mount Rushmore: nearly three decades of pure American music, respectfully remastered and rendered by the most hypnotic, compelling voice the business has ever known. And he's still turning them out. **Standout track:** "Folsom Prison Blues"



**PATSY CLINE**  
**The Ultimate Collection**

UTV, 2000  
It's easy to see Patsy Cline as a harbinger of the kind of MOR fare that now defines the country mainstream, but as proved by this compilation, her voice always carried the kind of compelling ache that Shania, Faith, et al. struggle to emulate. **Standout track:** "Crazy"



**STEVE EARLE**  
**Guitar Town**

MCA, 1986  
Earle was doing a decent *Dukes of Hazzard* country-rock outlaw even here on his debut, where he rocks hard and has the nerve to sing "Speed trap up ahead Selma town/But no local yokel's gonna shut me down." Later came crack and short stories. **Standout track:** "Someday"



**LEFTY FRIZZELL**  
**The Best of Lefty Frizzell**

RHINO, 1991  
He's less famous than Hank Williams, but Frizzell's wide Western yelp echoes in the voices of later country greats. That and his witty way with heartbreak make him an essential honky-tonker. **Standout track:** "If You've Got the Money (I've Got the Time)"



**MERLE HAGGARD**  
**The Lonesome Fugitive: The Merle Haggard Anthology**

(1963-1977)  
RAZOR & TIE, 1995  
Haggard had everything a country legend needs: killer voice, outstanding originals ("Mama Tried," "Branded Man") and, of course, a prison record. **Standout track:** "Sing Me Back Home"



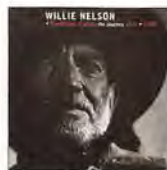
**GEORGE JONES**  
**The Essential George Jones: The Spirit of Country**

EPIC/LEGACY, 1994  
For five decades, the king of country has been there, drunk it, snorted it, married it, hit it and been busted for it: a soap opera not just sung but survived by the best singer ever to strap on a Stetson. **Standout track:** "He Stopped Loving Her Today"



**LORETTA LYNN**  
**All Time Greatest Hits**

MCA NASHVILLE, 2002  
No-nonsense arrangements and classic Conway Twitty duets present Lynn's hard-earned wisdom as a country archetype, putting men and women alike in their place. Nostalgic and bitter, resigned and spunky. **Standout track:** "You Ain't Woman Enough (To Take My Man)"



**WILLIE NELSON**  
**Revolutions of Time: The Journey**

(1975-1993) (Box Set)  
COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1995  
Nelson pulls off an album of standards as confidently as he did his trademark outlaw country. *Revolutions* offers a taste of it all. **Standout track:** "Angel Flying Too Close to the Ground"



**DOLLY PARTON**  
**RCA Country Legends**

RCA, 2002  
Country's first female genius, Parton has written and sung some of the most emotive popular music of the last century. She's also quite adaptable, moving from country to pop and back to country in her occasional bluegrass phases. **Standout track:** "Jolene"



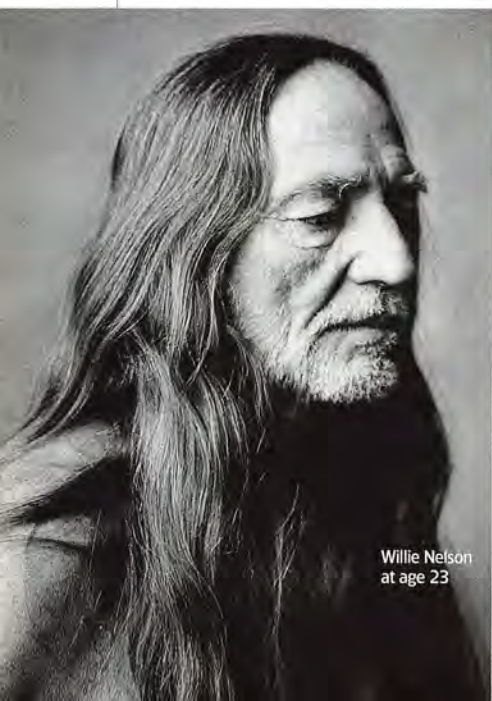
**JIMMIE RODGERS**  
**The Essential Jimmie Rodgers**

RCA, 1997  
The father of country music, Rodgers blended white hillbilly and black blues sounds, pointing the way for Hank Williams and Merle Haggard. His trademark blue yodel and down-to-earth songs still crackle with gritty conviction. **Standout track:** "In the Jailhouse Now"



**RANDY TRAVIS**  
**Trail of Memories: The Randy Travis Anthology**

RHINO, 2002  
Travis is Rocky to Dwight Yoakam's Apollo Creed, a no-frills singer with a workman's ethic. But the flash is in his voice: honey-roasted, Lefty Frizzell-informed old-style country. **Standout track:** "On the Other Hand"



Willie Nelson at age 23



**SHANIA TWAIN**  
**Come On Over**

MERCURY, 1997  
Her husband and producer, Robert John "Mutt" Lange, provides the butch beats, but only Twain can glow so prettily while telling off the boys. The result is girl-power arena rock that could have been the musical love child of Joan Jett and Dolly Parton. **Standout track:** "That Don't Impress Me Much"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**O Brother, Where Art Thou?**

Original Soundtrack  
LOST HIGHWAY, 2000  
This soundtrack reacquainted the world with the way the music used to sound: haunting, sparse and fixated with death. And it sold millions. **Standout track:** "The Soggy Bottom Boys, 'I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow'"



**HANK WILLIAMS**  
**40 Greatest Hits**

MERCURY, 1978  
With his drugs, his self-pity and his raw power, Hank Williams invented rock as well as modern country music. He died in the back of his car, predicted his own demise in several songs and made misery and self-doubt sound cool. **Standout track:** "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry"



**BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS**  
**Anthology: 1935-1973**

RHINO, 1991  
The king of Western swing and the sometimes 18-strong Playboys were the 1940s' dominant musical roots force, the missing link between the big-band era and country. **Standout track:** "New San Antonio Rose"



**TAMMY WYNETTE**  
**Anniversary: 20 Years of Hits**

EPIC, 1987  
Country's most dramatic female vocalist, bolstered by producer Billy Sherrill, who captured every crinkle of her voice: rollicking threats, teary accusations and defiant declarations of faithfulness. **Standout track:** "Stand by Your Man"



To cook ABBA, simply wrap in foil and bake.



**ABBA**  
The Definitive Collection

POLYGRAM, 2001  
From tacky Eurofroth ("Waterloo," "Ring Ring") to mature divorce tunes ("The Winner Takes It All," "One of Us") and genuine oddness ("The Day Before You Came"), ABBA's songs were so impressively produced that even Led Zeppelin used their studios.

**Standout track:** "Dancing Queen"



**BACKSTREET BOYS**  
The Hits — Chapter One

JIVE, 2001  
A foolishly optimistic title for a hits collection that effectively signaled the end of the Backstreet Boys' reign as chart-toppers. Still, they had a handsome run, as this vivacious collection of close-harmony pop proves. **Standout track:** "I Want It That Way"



**BEE GEES**  
Their Greatest Hits: The Record

LIPTOWN/UNIVERSAL, 2001  
The sheer class of the Bee Gees' output has restored them to universally accepted greatness even though they were reviled by the hip in their disco heyday. This 40-tracker is the definitive compilation of three harmonizers with four decades of chart smashes. **Standout track:** "Stayin' Alive"



**BREAD**  
The Best of Bread

RHINO, 2001  
This cadre of studio veterans exemplified the softer side of the early-'70s Southern California sound. In leader David Gates's überromantic setting, everything became a love song. Despite their earthy name, Bread were as fragile and sweet as cotton candy.

**Standout track:** "Everything I Own"



**THE CARPENTERS**  
Singles: 1969-1981

A&M, 2000  
Burt Bacharach gave the Carpenters hits, and death immortalized them. The unearthly voice of Karen Carpenter — pop's greatest singing drummer — turned even the goofiest of brother Richard's productions into a haunted place.

**Standout track:** "Goodbye to Love"



**NEIL DIAMOND**  
The Neil Diamond Collection

MCA, 1999  
Urge Overkill's cover of "Girl, You'll Be a Woman Soon" in *Pulp Fiction* sealed it: Diamond had become a pop touchstone for several generations, from writing Monkees hits to gliding through the '90s as a megastar.

**Standout track:** "Sweet Caroline"

**everclear**

**Slow Motion Daydream**  
The new album featuring "Volvo Driving Soccer Mom"  
See Everclear on Tour beginning April 2003!

**BEST BUY**  
Turn On the Fun

everclearonline.com

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# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Pop

## THE BEST OF

### DAD-POP



A martini, a "broad" and some do-be-do-be-do ...

#### HERB ALPERT'S TIJUANA BRASS

Whipped Cream and Other Delights

ASM, 1965  
Twelve instrumentals of pop-lite froth. Irresistibly zesty. **Standout track:** "Whipped Cream"

#### JOHN BARRY

Themeology: The Best of John Barry

COLUMBIA, 1997  
James Bond aside, the glamour in Barry's film music really endures. **Standout track:** "The James Bond Theme"

#### BING CROSBY

The Millennium Collection

MCA, 1999  
Just 12 tracks covering Crosby at his peak: smooth, chaste but definitely bedroom. **Standout track:** "Swinging On a Star"

#### FRANK SINATRA

Songs for Young Lovers/Swing Easy!

CAPITOL, 1955  
Two albums that interpret the hell out of the standards. **Standout track:** "I Get a Kick Out of You"

#### FRANK SINATRA

In the Wee Small Hours

CAPITOL, 1955  
In which Ol' Blue Eyes offers hep cat cool for a melancholy deep enough to drown in. **Standout track:** "When Your Lover Has Gone"

#### FRANK SINATRA

Sinatra Reprise: The Very Good Years

REPRISE, 1991  
Swinging, big band-heavy: It's the other sound of the '60s. **Standout track:** "Strangers in the Night"

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Doo Wop Box (Box Set)

RHINO, 1994  
The original do-it-yourself pop, no instruments needed — just sing out. **Standout track:** The Flamingos, "I Only Have Eyes for You"

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Look of Love: The Burt Bacharach Collection (Box Set)

RHINO, 1998  
A smooch-athon of sophisticated harmonies and wry lyrics. **Standout track:** Dionne Warwick, "Walk On By"



#### ENYA

Only Time: The Collection

RHINO/REPRISE, 2003  
Enya has never played live since she left her siblings' band Clannad, rarely does interviews and sounds like nobody on Earth. But with her layered vocals, unique sense of space and unique ability to soothe, what astonishing music she makes. **Standout track:** "Anywhere Is"



#### ELTON JOHN

Greatest Hits

POLYDOR, 1974  
John's first flowering brought him global stardom. This collection, from "Your Song" to "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," remains his bedrock despite his career's current renaissance. And isn't "If I Was a Sculptor, but then again, no" still fabulous? **Standout track:** "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road"



#### MADONNA

Greatest Hits

WARNER BROS., 2001  
Few artists manage to fill a second best-of collection with legitimate hits, but as everybody knows, Madonna is no ordinary pop singer. This is the post-'80s stuff — from the weepy "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" to the cutting-edge electronica of "Music." **Standout track:** "Ray of Light"



#### WHITNEY HOUSTON

Whitney Houston

ARISTA, 1985  
Houston's powerful voice may have become dulled by overfamiliarity, but this remains a whiff of innocence from the days when she had no obvious problems. You'll be amazed how many of these songs are part of your DNA. **Standout track:** "How Will I Know"



#### KC & THE SUNSHINE BAND

Behind the Music: The KC & the Sunshine Band Collection

RHINO, 2001  
When this Florida dance collective cranked it up, they were the kings of clubs. Their mix of disco and pop was curiously frisky and refreshing. **Standout track:** "That's the Way (I Like It)"



#### MICHAEL JACKSON

Off the Wall

EPIC, 1979  
Remember him not as the fallen, ravaged king of pop but as its crown prince. Jackson and producer Quincy Jones meld the effervescence of his youth with post-disco sophistication. **Standout track:** "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough"



#### MICHAEL JACKSON

Thriller

EPIC, 1982  
Before the music became a side issue to the man himself, there was *Thriller*, a mighty colossus featuring seven Top 10 singles and producing a raft of extraordinary statistics. Forgive the occasional schmaltzy moments — this is an all-time soul-pop classic. **Standout track:** "Billie Jean"



#### JACKSON 5

Anthology

MOTOWN, 2000  
As brothers, the Jacksons never really got the props they deserved. They were, after all, their legendary soul label's teen-pop sensations. But as this two-CD collection amply proves, their string of hits — sunny, infectious and funky — was extraordinary. **Standout track:** "I Want You Back"



#### BILLY JOEL

The Stranger

COLUMBIA, 1977  
Joel, a truculent cult pianist from Long Island, vaulted into Top 40 dominance with this showy, romanticized vision of city sprawl, complete with moonlighting cops, Broadway schlock, love-struck greasers and the peerless wedding ballad "Just the Way You Are." **Standout track:** "Movin' Out (Anthony's Song)"



#### THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL

Greatest Hits

BLIDDHA, 2002  
From out of the mid-'60s Greenwich Village folk scene they came, scoring a succession of lively hits with their cheerily melodic jug-band pop. They were never better than on "Summer in the City," which smells of heat-wave New York. **Standout track:** "Summer in the City"



#### MADONNA

The Immaculate Collection

SIRE, 1990  
Little more than an escalating series of sexual challenges ("Like a Virgin," "Like a Prayer," "Justify My Love"), Madonna's first best-of is brazen, gaudy, tush-wiggling fun of the first order. Funny how she seems to take it all so seriously, isn't it? **Standout track:** "Into the Groove"



#### CAROLE KING

Tapestry

EPIC/LEGACY, 1971  
Brill building master crafts-woman King wrote Monkees, Crystals and Aretha Franklin hits until, still just 29, she brought her own tough voice and gospelly piano to bear on these immaculate compositions. Its comforting melancholy became a singer-songwriters' hallmark. **Standout track:** "It's Too Late"



What is the secret of Madonna's success?



#### THE MAMAS & THE PAPAS

Greatest Hits

MCA, 1998  
Who can resist the sparkling harmony of "All the Leaves are Brown"? As album opens go, "California Dreamin'" takes some beating, but if Mama Cass et al. could never quite match it, you'll love how close they got while trying. **Standout track:** "California Dreamin'"



#### GEORGE MICHAEL

Faith

COLUMBIA, 1987  
With leather jacket, guitar and sexual bravado, Michael successfully rid himself of his teeny-bop Wham! years and his '80s pop image. He did this so successfully that nothing he has done since has excited America or the world to such an extent as this. **Standout track:** "Faith"



The Jackson 5 would come to regret designing their own house.



**THE MONKEES**  
Then & Now ...  
The Best of the Monkees

ARISTA, 1986  
Manufactured pop at its best. Invented as a puppet Beatles, the Monkees got the coolest songs that late-'60s white pop could produce, and stretched the music's boundaries — hence "The Porpoise Song." **Standout track:** "I'm a Believer"



**ENNIO MORRICONE**  
The Ennio Morricone Anthology: A Fistful of Film Music

RHINO, 1995  
The spaghetti-Western themes are all here — but they barely scratch the surface for a man who has 500 soundtracks to his name. **Standout track:** "The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti Part 2"



**OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN**  
Magic: The Best of Olivia Newton-John

UTV, 2001  
Arguably the most underrated hitmaker of all time. That's probably because she's no innovator — and is way too cute to be sexy — but this compilation oozes pop sass. **Standout track:** "Have You Never Been Mellow"



**PINK**  
M!ssundaztood

ARISTA, 2002  
Dirrty R&B, mall-rat pop, angst MTV2 ballads: Pink can seemingly do it all, helped a tad by producer L.A. Reid and, astonishingly, ex-4 Non Blonde Linda Perry. She also brings whiny Cobain/Eminem white-trash attitude to the teen-girl market. **Standout track:** "Get the Party Started"



**SMOKEY ROBINSON & THE MIRACLES**  
Ooo Baby Baby: Anthology

MOTOWN, 2003  
No one since Cole Porter has made a love lyric backflip, sing and dance like the silver-tongued, silken-voiced hit machine, who lived it like he sang it. Forty-five tunes, not a dud among them. **Standout track:** "The Tracks of My Tears"



**DIANA ROSS**  
The Motown Anthology

MOTOWN, 2001  
Once she left the Supremes in 1970, Ross set out to conquer the world. She nearly succeeded. This two-disc set captures the complete saga, from glitzy ballads to disco reinvention — and her grim current status as confused legend. **Standout track:** "Love Hangover"



**DIANA ROSS & THE SUPREMES**  
Anthology

UPTOWN/UNIVERSAL, 2001  
Fifty tracks by the '60s' pre-eminent girl group, this also provides proof of Motown's widening horizons. The early cuts are neat examples of perfect pop, but later on — as on "You Keep Me Hanging On" — things take more ambitious turns. **Standout track:** "Where Did Our Love Go"

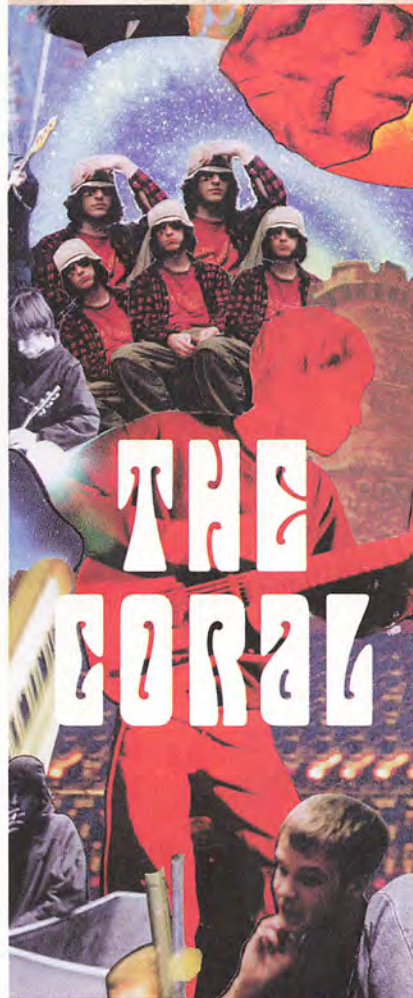
**ARTISTS' PICKS: Tony Kanal, No Doubt**

→ **BAD BRAINS**  
I Against I

SST, 1986  
"Bad Brains were the greatest hardcore punk band, and this record was very big with me. It brings the serious musicianship that punk bands are supposed to avoid."



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- New Musical Express



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Even the Bee Gees' gardening clothes were far-out.



**THE SHANGRI-LAS**  
The Millennium Collection

MCA, 2002  
Teen-angst classics with bizarre soundscapes, aching vocals and overwrought lyrics drenched in hormones: These songs confirm that the Shangri-Las were the most real '60s girl group. **Standout track:** "Remember (Walkin' in the Sand)"



**THE SHIRELLES**  
The Very Best of the Shirelles

RHINO, 1994  
This New Jersey quartet went from doo-wop dollies to pop sophisticates in their short but exceedingly sweet early-'60s prime. Of course, having songwriters such as Goffin/King and Bacharach/David didn't hurt, either. **Standout track:** "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow"



**SPICE GIRLS**  
Spice

VIRGIN, 1996  
Perhaps the greatest girl group since the Supremes, and briefly the best pop act of the 1990s. Tacky, loud, brash and British, Posh, Ginger, Sporty, Baby and Scary never really told anyone what "girl power" was, but they were clearly made of the stuff. **Standout track:** "Wannabe"



**DUSTY SPRINGFIELD**  
Dusty in Memphis

RHINO, 1969  
More commanding and more expressive than before. With Atlantic's fabled production team behind her, Springfield hits deft emotional peaks amid tasteful arrangements and sterling Southern musicianship. **Standout track:** "Son of a Preacher Man"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
25 All-Time Greatest Bubblegum Hits: The Ultimate Collection

VARESE SARABANDE, 2000  
It was made to be disposable, but it still sounds great. Lacking any social message, the best examples — the Archies, the Monkees, Sweet, etc. — are timeless. **Standout track:** The Archies, "Sugar, Sugar"



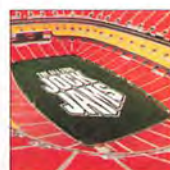
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
The Disco Box (Box Set)

RHINO, 1999  
The metronome for this four-CD treasure trove is stuck on "whiplash." But the music from this flamboyant, feverish era is innocent, electrifying, propulsive and aerobic, and it remains surprisingly vital. **Standout track:** Lipps Inc., "Funkytown"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Girl Group Greats

RHINO, 2001  
These 20 terrific hits capture the exuberance of femme-pop in the early '60s. An alluring blend of innocence and experience from Motown (the Supremes) to overwrought teen-queen melodrama (Lesley Gore). **Standout track:** Jaynetts, "Sally, Go 'Round the Roses"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Jock Jams: The All Star Jock Jams

TOMMY BOY, 2001  
High-energy arena music has practically become its own genre. This definitive compilation spans rock, rap and pop to produce the perfect pregame warmup. **Standout track:** Britney Spears, "...Baby One More Time"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
The Perfect Beats Volume 2

TOMMY BOY, 1998  
Madonna emerged in the 1980s from freestyle music and electro-beat-driven dance music. She outlasted many here, but Strafe's "Set It Off" and New Order's "Confusion" left a lasting legacy. **Standout track:** Shannon, "Let the Music Play"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Phil Spector: Back to Mono (1958-1969) (Box Set)

ABKCO, 1991  
Pop perfection. Spector's operatic Wall of Sound lends an overwhelming quality to the love ditties of the Ronettes, Ike & Tina Turner and the Crystals. **Standout track:** The Ronettes, "Be My Baby"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Saturday Night Fever — Original Soundtrack

POLYDOR, 1977  
This blasted the Bee Gees into the stratosphere, their pop falsettos high-ending a compulsive funk. Kool, KC and Trampms fill the dance-floor gaps. **Standout track:** The Trampms, "Disco Inferno"

**ARTISTS' PICKS: Dan Nakamura, producer**

→ **SERGE GAINSBOURG**  
Histoire de Melody Nelson

POLYDOR, 1971  
"Serge was the French Frank Sinatra and Barry White rolled up into one. How can you not like a lecherous drunk who, on TV, tells Whitney Houston he wants to fuck her?"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Ultra-Lounge, Vol. 1: Mondo Exotica

CAPITOL, 1996  
Built around Martin Denny's Hawaiian-influenced sound, which gave birth to the exotica genre. Just the thing when your seduction skills would benefit from the right soundtrack. **Standout track:** Martin Denny, "Quiet Village"



**VILLAGE PEOPLE**  
The Best of Village People

CASABLANCA, 1994  
They were very silly. They didn't care. They performed the campiest songs of all time, and jocks everywhere are still dancing to them. Gay disco was born here and was never more cartoony or fun. And the "Y.M.C.A." lineup is still a pop icon. **Standout track:** "Y.M.C.A."



**MARY J. BLIGE**  
**What's the 411?**

MCA, 1992  
Grafting a throaty, often gospel-tinged voice onto hip-hop beats, *What's the 411?* both invented hip-hop soul and introduced its still-undisputed queen. Concurrent remixes of the title track and "Reminisce" cement the style countless singers have copied.  
**Standout track:** "Reminisce"



**BOOKER T. & THE MG'S**  
**The Very Best of Booker T. & The MG's**

RHINO, 1994  
It's all about the rhythm section, and the Stax-Volt house band was the best. Cutting a solid instrumental groove, they proved that less is more: The tunes are wistful, libidinous and playful.  
**Standout track:** "Green Onions"



**JAMES BROWN**  
**Live at the Apollo [1962]**

POLYGRAM, 1963  
One of the great live albums, featuring the drum-tight Famous Flames, Brown's galvanic charisma and a delirious 1,500-strong audience. Prefunk Brown offers hectic soul music with the transcendent intensity of a gospel meeting.  
**Standout track:** "Lost Someone"



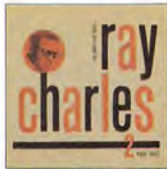
**JAMES BROWN**  
**Star Time (Box Set)**

POLYDOR, 1991  
Four CDs of funk so hard that, dancing to Soul Brother Number 1, even black men do the white man's overbite. Brown's sounds stopped riots in the '60s, but they'll start riots in your underwear right now.  
**Standout track:** "Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine"



**RAY CHARLES**  
**Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music**

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1962  
Above the strings and choirs, Brother Ray looks at the white man's blues. Charles's soulful phrasing on "Careless Love" and his jazzy interpretation of "Hey, Good Lookin'" are worth every bit of over-production.  
**Standout track:** "Careless Love"



**RAY CHARLES**  
**The Birth of Soul (Box Set)**

ATLANTIC, 1991  
In the 1950s, Charles went from tasteful balladeer to mind-blowing R&B rumbler. America soon followed, and when "What'd I Say" wouldn't fit on one 45, he had the sense to write part two. Pure (albeit self-proclaimed) genius over three CDs.  
**Standout track:** "Lonely Avenue"



**CHIC**  
**Dance, Dance, Dance: The Best of Chic**

ATLANTIC, 1991  
The headiest mix of infectious dance grooves overlaid with melodies and arrangements that stand comparison with those of Bacharach or Lennon & McCartney, played blisteringly by virtuosos and paired with witty lyrics.  
**Standout track:** "Le Freak"



**THE COASTERS**  
**50 Coastin' Classics**

RHINO, 1992  
Aided by rock's first great writer-producer team, Leiber and Stoller, the Coasters transformed doo-wop/R&B vocal harmonizing into a string of pioneering and funny rock & roll smashes. If they were starting out now, they'd be a hip-hop Sum 41.  
**Standout track:** "Charlie Brown"



**SAM COOKE**  
**The Man and His Music**

RCA, 1986  
This set shows that vocally, Sam Cooke was the vital link between the silky-smooth balladry of Nat "King" Cole and the raw R&B power of Ray Charles. And as a songwriter, he turned gospel into soul and then gave soul a social conscience.  
**Standout track:** "Another Saturday Night"



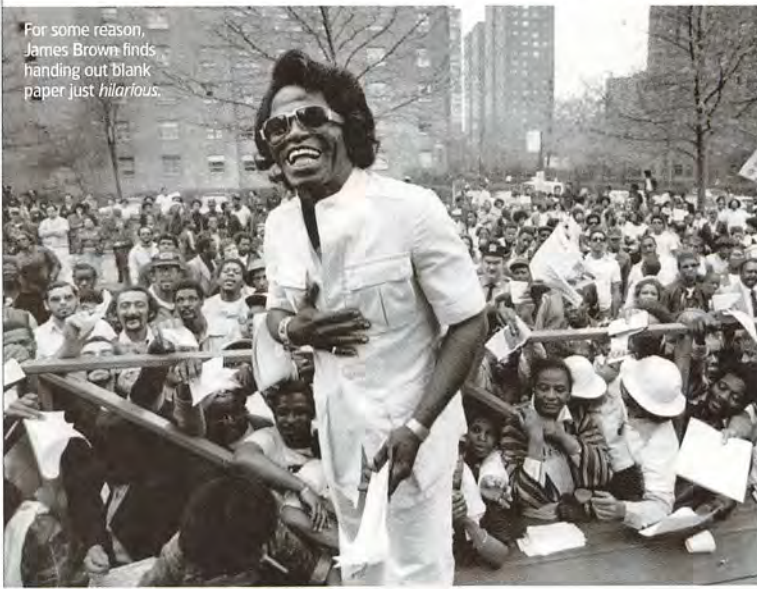
**D'ANGELO**  
**Brown Sugar**

CAPITOL, 1995  
Revitalizing R&B with a revolutionary injection of hip-hop aestheticism, the 21-year-old Virginia soul man's debut, centered around his understated, multi-tracked falsetto, won instant-classic status. Hip-hop soul from the male perspective.  
**Standout track:** "Shit, Damn, Motherf\*cker"



**BO DIDDLEY**  
**His Best (The Chess 50th Anniversary Collection)**

CHESS/MCA, 1997  
Rock & roll pioneer Elias McDaniel patented a beat, while the wobbly sound that came out of his square guitar sounded like voodoo. And "Who Do You Love?" is superbad.  
**Standout track:** "Who Do You Love?"



For some reason, James Brown finds handing out blank paper just *hilarious*.

Robbie Williams  
Escapology The new album featuring Feel

Virgin  
Chrysalis

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**FATS DOMINO**  
The Fats Domino Jukebox: 20 Greatest Hits the Way You Originally Heard Them

CAPITOL, 2002  
Antoine "Fats" Domino brought rolling New Orleans rhythms to teen audiences. His genial vocals and rippling piano made the bluesiest laments feel good. **Standout track:** "Blue Monday"



**LEE DORSEY**  
Working in a Coal Mine: The Very Best of Lee Dorsey

MUSIC CLUB, 2001  
Delivering some of Allen Toussaint's funkier songs, Dorsey carried the banner for low-down '60s New Orleans soul. This sly, laconic singer has a loose-jointed charm similar to early Little Feat. **Standout track:** "Holy Cow"



**THE DRIFTERS**  
All Time Greatest Hits & More: 1959-1965

ATLANTIC, 1988  
Whatever the lineup changes, when the songs of Leiber & Stoller and the Brill Building meet Clyde McPhatter, Ben E. King and Johnny Moore's vocals, R&B falls in love with pop. **Standout track:** "Save the Last Dance for Me"



**EARTH, WIND & FIRE**  
The Essential Earth, Wind & Fire

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2002  
The album tracks show Maurice White's collective experimenting with trippy time signatures, Afro-Cuban beats and sparkly harmonies. The hits show off the greatest pop-soul act of its era. **Standout track:** "Fantasy"



**ARETHA FRANKLIN**  
Queen of Soul: The Atlantic Recordings (Box Set)

RHINO, 1992  
Church, the civil-rights movement, loss, marital turmoil: Franklin knew it all, then sang it so truly, she's arguably the greatest singer ever recorded. This is certainly her best. **Standout track:** "I Say a Little Prayer"



**FUNKADELIC**  
One Nation Under a Groove

CAPITOL, 1978  
George Clinton's acid-happy soul spacemen brought a message from on high: "Free your mind and your ass will follow." Stone grooves, stoned gags and phreak-out guitars combine to party down in the name of togetherness. **Standout track:** "One Nation Under a Groove"



**FUNKADELIC**  
Music for Your Mother: Funkadelic 45s

WESTBOUND, 1993  
Clinton's wildly experimental, rock-oriented project produced hypnotic grooves that rarely lost sight of the funk. Here's their landmark 1969-'76 tenure with Detroit's Westbound label. **Standout track:** "Standing On the Verge of Getting It On"



**MARVIN GAYE**  
Anthology

MOTOWN, 1995  
Music's ultimate sexual intellectual, Gaye drove his soul to the breaking point, pouring passion into incendiary romance, pained protest about the Vietnam War and ecological abuses. His life in ruins, he still sang with a honeyed sense of beauty. **Standout track:** "I Heard It Through the Grapevine"



**AL GREEN**  
Greatest Hits

CAPITOL, 1975  
There's no filler whatsoever in this smooth collection from the '70s' leading soul man. Green sings with Southern gospel fervor, but his lascivious wails speak only of sin. Soon he would force himself to choose between the two... **Standout track:** "Let's Stay Together"



**AL GREEN**  
Al Green's Greatest Hits Vol. 2

MOTOWN, 1977  
Released as Green was buying himself a church and joining the ministry. The last great soul singer was turning away from pop life, perhaps because here he had said all there was to say about earthly matters. **Standout track:** "Take Me to the River"



**LAURYN HILL**  
The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill

COLUMBIA, 1998  
The finest recent soul album, the Fugee's solo debut stands up well next to Aretha, never mind Erykah or India. Mixing rapping, powerful singing and rich, complex backing, it's tough to follow, as Hill is currently proving. **Standout track:** "Ex-Factor"



**THE ISLEY BROTHERS**  
It's Your Thing: The Story of the Isley Brothers

EPIC/LEGACY, 1998  
Four decades and 39 chart hits squeezed from one sweaty, soulful family. As befitted a band that included Jimi Hendrix in its early lineup, they rocked, too, with Ernie Isley a worthy guitar successor. **Standout track:** "Who's That Lady"



**JANET JACKSON**  
Design of a Decade 1986/1996: The Best of Janet Jackson

A&M, 1995  
With songwriting and production from Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Jackson cooked up the tightest sound of her era. **Standout track:** "What Have You Done for Me Lately?"



**ETTA JAMES**  
Her Best (The Chess 50th Anniversary Collection)

CHESS/MCA, 1997  
Rapturous, thanks to a voice that is a brick house one moment but kittenish the next. Her touch of innocence is essential — otherwise you'd never believe a singer this shattering could ever be vulnerable. **Standout track:** "At Last"



**LOUIS JORDAN**  
Let the Good Times Roll: The Anthology 1938-1953

MCA, 1999  
Jordan was the bridge between big-band jazz and early rock. His comic tunes and jivin' vocals disguised virtuoso playing. **Standout track:** "What's the Use of Getting Sober (When You're Gonna Get Drunk Again)?"



**R. KELLY**  
12 Play

JIVE, 1993  
Many accused this controversial Chicagoan of putting his gospel training to questionable use on this sex-happy debut of slick slow jams. Heard today, Kelly's first bump-n'-grind directives are playfully smooth and eerily prophetic, but no less effective. **Standout track:** "Your Body's Callin'"

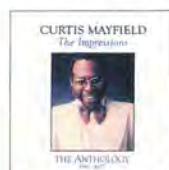


Prince: In the '80s, everyone dressed like this.



**LITTLE RICHARD**  
The Georgia Peach

SPECIALTY, 1991  
Piano-pounding Little Richard made even Elvis seem tame on these '50s hits. Shrieking and shouting as he raced through primitive songs at top speed, he inspired James Brown, the Beatles and Chris Tucker. **Standout track:** "Tutti Frutti"



**CURTIS MAYFIELD**  
The Impressions: The Anthology: 1961-1977

MCA, 1992  
Mayfield's evolution from the Impressions' main man to solo funk-ed-up, politicized soul, chronicled to marvelous effect. The word *progression* is laughably inadequate. **Standout track:** "(Don't Worry) If There's a Hell Below, We're All Going to Go"





George Clinton:  
Hot or not? Not.

# THE JAYHAWKS

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**THE METERS**  
**Gold**

**THE METERS**  
**The Very Best of the Meters**  
RHINO, 1997  
Joining James Brown and Sly Stone as one of the most sampled acts ever, the Meters' sweaty blend of instrumental New Orleans funk regularly graced '70s R&B charts. It once made them popular enough to support the Rolling Stones on tour. **Standout track:** "Cissy Strut"



**OHIO PLAYERS**  
**Gold**

**OHIO PLAYERS**  
**Gold**  
MERCURY, 1976  
Everybody digs the horn-driven pride of Dayton. They're the once and future kings of the groove stomp, sizzling music that's both combative and contagious. This compilation throws open the doors of the funk vault. Warning: Rude cover alert! **Standout track:** "Love Roller-coaster"



**PARLIAMENT**  
**Tear the Roof Off, 1974-1980**

**PARLIAMENT**  
**Tear the Roof Off, 1974-1980**  
CASABLANCA, 1983  
George Clinton's widely sampled legacy is a trippy cosmic slop of elastic bass lines, fusiony synths, extraterrestrial mythology and keen sloganeering. A booty-blasting invitation to get up on the down stroke. **Standout track:** "Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof Off the Sucker)"



**WILSON PICKETT**  
**The Very Best of Wilson Pickett**

**WILSON PICKETT**  
**The Very Best of Wilson Pickett**  
RHINO, 1993  
A hard-assed titan of '60s soul who could almost strip paint with his larynx, "wicked" Pickett could sweet-talk your girl into his bed and was so awesome you'd think he could even make "Hey Jude" funky. And he could. **Standout track:** "Engine No. 9"



**PRINCE**  
**Dirty Mind**

**PRINCE**  
**Dirty Mind**  
WARNER BROS., 1980  
Prince's third album not only fulfilled his prodigious multi-instrumental promise but managed to flirt with everything from R&B to New Wave. It remains — particularly considering the Lisa Coleman duet "Head" — one of the most utterly filthy records ever made. **Standout track:** "When You Were Mine"



**PRINCE & THE NEW POWER GENERATION**  
**Music From Purple Rain**

**PRINCE & THE NEW POWER GENERATION**  
**Music From Purple Rain**  
WARNER BROS., 1984  
The multi-platinum breakthrough soundtrack that launched the all-singing, all-dancing, pocket-sex-god antidote to King Jacko. It's here that Jimi Hendrix met Little Richard in grandstanding style. **Standout track:** "Purple Rain"



**PRINCE**  
**Sign 'O' the Times**

**PRINCE**  
**Sign 'O' the Times**  
PAISLEY PARK/WARNER BROS., 1987  
A testament to Prince in his prime, as proved by both its musical scope and lyrical daring: What other male would author a song called "If I Was Your Girlfriend"? Once you have this, track down the concert movie of the same name. **Standout track:** "Sign 'O' the Times"



**OTIS REDDING**  
**The Very Best of Otis Redding Vol. 1**

**OTIS REDDING**  
**The Very Best of Otis Redding Vol. 1**  
RHINO, 1993  
Almost all of his essential songs are here. Among several high points is his fevered, charged reading of the Stones' "I Can't Get No Satisfac-tion," one of the most inspired covers of the '60s. **Standout track:** "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay"



**JILL SCOTT**  
**Who Is Jill Scott? Words & Sounds Vol. 1**

**JILL SCOTT**  
**Who Is Jill Scott? Words & Sounds Vol. 1**  
HIDDEN BEACH, 2000  
She has us from *hello*: On this debut, she's the high-flying poet teeming with self-respect. This heralded the triumph of neosoul and spread the news that anybody still tossing around *bitch* and *ho* was most likely some old fool. **Standout track:** "Brotha"



**SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE**  
**Anthology**

**SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE**  
**Anthology**  
EPIC, 1981  
Once dedicated to rocks-off joy ("Life," "Fun"), Sylvester Stewart epitomized early-'70s hedonism. Then he surrendered to a social conscience and drugs to become a prophet of doom and despair. You'll laugh, cry and dance your ass off. **Standout track:** "Family Affair"

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TLC: "We'd like to buy a vowel!"



## THE SPINNERS The Very Best of the Spinners

RHINO, 1993

From Detroit, they failed at Motown before becoming a successful act with Atlantic. Slyly political, but underpinned by Phillippe Wynne's foxy vocals and Thom Bell's warm production, this explains why the Spinners were the soul act of the early '70s.

**Standout track:** "I'll Be Around"



## DONNA SUMMER The Donna Summer Anthology

CASABLANCA/CHRONICLES, 1993

Even though here "Love to Love You Baby" is a short edit, Giorgio Moroder's production and Summer's just-been-fucked vocals ensure that these two CDs shimmer with sex.

**Standout track:** "I Feel Love"



## THE TEMPTATIONS The Ultimate Collection

MOTOWN, 1997

These Motown stalwarts may have followed trends rather than established them, but they still produced irresistible moods and moments. Even at its best, the music was nothing next to their real lives: drugs, drink, suicide. **Standout track:** "Get Ready"



## TLC CrazySexyCool

LAFACE/ARISTA, 1994

This Atlanta trio took a great leap forward on its second album, replacing the gaudy Day-Glo girl power of their debut with crisp, empowered anthems, rich autobiography and sophisticated arrangements that fused hip-hop swagger and R&B swing. **Standout track:** "Waterfalls"



## IKE AND TINA TURNER Proud Mary: The Best of Ike and Tina Turner

EMI, 1991

The sheer intensity of this couple's unsettling relationship made their music ferociously high-octane. Then there's Tina's delivery raising these pumping anthems to another level. **Standout track:** "River Deep, Mountain High"



## VARIOUS ARTISTS The Best of Blaxploitation

GLOBAL TV, 1998

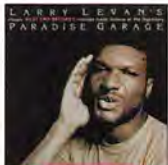
Blowing the dust off such overlooked classics as Billy Paul's "Am I Black Enough for You" and Bobby Womack's "Across 110th Street": the best compilation to emerge from the late-'90s blaxploitation revival. **Standout track:** Curtis Mayfield, "Superfly"



## VARIOUS ARTISTS Finger Poppin' and Stompin' Feet: 20 Classic Allen Toussaint Productions for Minit Records 1960-1962

CAPITOL, 2002

The hottest writer-producer ever to emerge from New Orleans at the spectacular outset of his long career. **Standout track:** Ernie K-Doe, "Mother-in-Law"



## VARIOUS ARTISTS Larry Levan's Paradise Garage

WEST END, 2000

From 1979 to 1982, Paradise Garage was New York's home of house, and Larry Levan — who died of AIDS in 1992 — its most skilled and tasteful DJ. This hip-as-hell compilation showcases his remarkable mixing skills. **Standout track:** Taana Gardner, "Heartbeat"



## VARIOUS ARTISTS New Orleans Party Classics

RHINO, 1992

Crescent City music encompasses far more than infectious rhythms, although they're abundant on this terrific 18-track set — from the ram-buncation Dirty Dozen Brass Band to the growling funk of Dr. John. **Standout track:** Professor Longhair, "Big Chief Pt. 1"



## VARIOUS ARTISTS The Philly Sound: Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff & the Story of Brotherly Love (1966-1976) (Box Set)

EPIC/LEGACY, 1997

Over three CDs and 48 tracks, Gamble and Huff's legacy of thoughtful dance-soul at its peak. **Standout track:** Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, "Wake Up Everybody"



## WAR Anthology (1970-1994)

RHINO, 1994

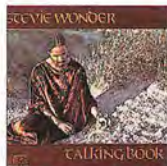
Thirty-two songs from the Long Beach, California, collective that inspired a generation of West Coast hip-hopers. From Eric Burdon's back-injected band to full-fledged hitmakers, War always had a groove that moved. "The Cisco Kid" and "Low Rider" scream **Standout track:** "Low Rider"



## BARRY WHITE All-Time Greatest Hits

MERCURY, 1995

If Barry White on the stereo couldn't get you laid in the '70s, God help you. You can laugh, but the Walrus of Love, his massive croon reclining on well-upholstered lounge-funk, is the closest music gets to Rohypnol. **Standout track:** "Never, Never Gonna Give You Up"



## STEVIE WONDER Talking Book

MOTOWN, 1972

Wonder's peerless mid-'70s winning streak starts here. His sunny-but-gritty songwriting gift finds expression in a new capacity for studio innovation. The result is an album on which classic soul flowers into subtle and expansive mood music. **Standout track:** "Superstition"



## STEVIE WONDER Innervisions

MOTOWN, 1973

The point at which Wonder's genius became sustained rather than fleeting. This incendiary, ambitious album, appositely titled for a blind artist, is unquestionably Wonder's masterpiece. At this moment, he was the world's most important singer. **Standout track:** "Higher Ground"



Barry White considers eating another chair.



## STEVIE WONDER Fulfillingness' First Finale

MOTOWN, 1974

Wonder had survived a near-fatal car crash, and the theme of mortality creeps into many of his sweet, soulful ballads. Headier than *Innervisions*, the album's elusive charms are intense and beautiful. **Standout track:** "You Haven't Done Nothin'"



## STEVIE WONDER Songs in the Key of Life

MOTOWN, 1976

Wonder at his most expansive, expressive and elegant. There's a lot of music here, but you're still left wanting more of his soul, his politics and his magic. Can you ignore "Isn't She Lovely"? Try, for your own benefit. **Standout track:** "Love's in Need of Love Today"



**A TRIBE CALLED QUEST**  
The Anthology

*JIVE, 1999*  
The Quest's mother-ship ran on jazz, not funk, and while other rappers bragged about their "flava," Phife celebrated his "taste." Smooth flow and a warm positivity were their stately hallmarks; *Anthology* culls tracks from Tribe's five releases. **Standout track:** "Can I Kick It?"



**AFRIKA BAMBAATAA**  
Looking for the Perfect Beat 1980-1995

*TOMMY BOY, 2001*  
Bambaataa's importance as the first to properly sample has long been overlooked, but there was much more to this performer, producer and DJ than mere innovation — and he did find the perfect beat. **Standout track:** "Planet Rock"



**BIG DADDY KANE**  
The Very Best of Big Daddy Kane

*RHINO, 2001*  
Kane's flair on the microphone was matched only by his flashy stage outfits. This collection captures a young Kane perfecting his raw skills before re-inventing himself as a New Jack loverman. **Standout track:** "Ain't No Half Steppin'"



**BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS**  
Criminal Minded

*SUGAR HILL, 1987*  
As BDP, rapper KRS-One and DJ Scott LaRock turned the violent gruffness of ghetto life into a proud vision of survival and uplift. It all started with this incendiary debut of imposing boasts, dancehall bravado and now-classic rock-hard beats. **Standout track:** "Criminal Minded"



**CYPRESS HILL**  
Cypress Hill

*RUFFHOUSE/COLUMBIA, 1991*  
B-Real spits wicked nursery rhymes like a lethal Beastie. DJ Muggs mixes Bomb Squad-style dissonance with languid funk to achieve maximum barrio fabulousness. Anticop, pro-guitar, it's the album that made cannabis as hip-hop as Kangols and Adidas. **Standout track:** "Light Another"



**DE LA SOUL**  
3 Feet High and Rising

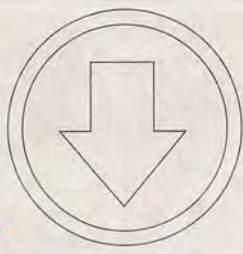
*TOMMY BOY, 1989*  
Ushering in the Daisy Age with a smile and a wink, this was a refreshing hip-hop debut. Positivity in rap never became common, but listening to this album's cheery bounce and mind-bending samples, you have to wonder why not. **Standout track:** "Eye Know"



Cypress Hill: "Move along, nothing to see here!"

BLENDER'S PROMOTIONAL SECTION

**GUEST LIST**



These guys are always "on the list."

**bloomingdale's**

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\*\*The Surfrider Foundation is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves and beaches through conservation, activism, research, and education. For more information, log onto [www.surfrider.org](http://www.surfrider.org).

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# 500 CDs You Must Own ★ Hip-Hop

## THE BEST OF GANGSTA RAP



Sex, money, jail and murder... often in that order

### 2PAC Me Against the World

*INTERSCOPE, 1995*  
He rhymed of love for his mother in one breath and spewed misogyny in the next. Oh, those contradictions... **Standout track:** "If I Die 2Nite"

### ICE CUBE Greatest Hits

*PRIORITY, 2001*  
N.W.A. bruiser-turned-multiplatinum solo "bitch killer," squeezing three careers out of a booming baritone and a vicious scowl. **Standout track:** "\$100 Dollar Bill, Y'all"

### DR. DRE The Chronic

*DEATH ROW/INTERSCOPE, 1992*  
Premiering bouncy, Parliament-indebted G-funk and introducing Snoop Doggy Dogg. **Standout track:** "Nuthin' but a 'G' thang"

### GETO BOYS Greatest Hits

*RAP-A-LOT, 2002*  
Original gangstas, Houston's Geto Boys reflected inner-city machismo and brutality with total clarity. **Standout track:** "Mind Playin' Tricks"

### MOBB DEEP The Infamous

*LOUD/RCA, 1995*  
Their second CD spliced nihilistic raps with urban soundscapes. **Standout track:** "Shook Ones Pt. II"

### NAS Illmatic

*COLUMBIA, 1994*  
Detailing his cold world and colder heart, *Illmatic* introduced one of hip-hop's thug intellectuals. **Standout track:** "Life's a Bitch"

### N.W.A. Straight Outta Compton

*RUTHLESS/PRIORITY, 1988*  
Where gangsta rap went distinctly overground: bitter, twisted, full of cussing and utterly irresponsible. **Standout track:** "Fuck tha Police"

### SNOOP DOGGY DOGG Doggystyle

*DEATH ROW/INTERSCOPE, 1993*  
Snoop is a ganja-obsessed, X-rated gangsta cartoon on his debut, more interested in puffing and pimping than in violence. **Standout track:** "Gin and Juice"



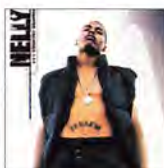
### DMX It's Dark and Hell Is Hot

*RUFF RYDERS/DEF JAM, 1998*  
DMX debuted with this two years after the death of Tupac Shakur. The bald, pathological MC growled, barked and rhymed of his rough-and-tumble New York upbringing, creating his own gruff style and flipping off those who branded him a copycat. **Standout track:** "Get At Me Dog"



### FUGEES The Score

*RUFFHOUSE/COLUMBIA, 1996*  
With soul and reggae as well as hip-hop, the second album from Lauryn Hill, Wyclef Jean and Pras Michel showcased a novel rap sound and became a global hit. With its shuffling beats and low-key samples, it remains a haunting work. **Standout track:** "Killing Me Softly With Song"



### NELLY Country Grammar

*FOUR/ELEVEN/UNIVERSAL, 2000*  
Move aside, East and West: Behold the Midwest! From St. Louis, Nelly minted multiplatinum hip-hop with lilting, singsong party raps. Virtually every line connected like a fishhook, and the hooks themselves ("E-I-E-I-Oh-Ohhh!") made blissfully little sense. **Standout track:** "Country Grammar"



### MISSY ELLIOTT Under Construction

*GOLD MIND/ELEKTRA, 2002*  
Missy keeps her freak on, preaching hip-hop détente, giving pep talks to her pussy and, with longtime collaborator Timbaland, importing new global exotica, not to mention skipping back to the '80s for vintage samples. A genuinely thrilling affair. **Standout track:** "Work It"



### GRANDMASTER FLASH Message From Beat Street: The Best of Grandmaster Flash, Melle Mel & the Furious Five

*RHINO, 1994*  
Hip-hop pioneers: party tunes, complex collages and "The Message," rap's first attempt at telling it like it is. **Standout track:** "The Message"



### EMINEM The Slim Shady LP

*AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE, 1999*  
Say hello to hip-hop's most controversial character. Few could tell where Slim Shady ended and Marshall Mathers III began, but it was uneasy fun trying, as violent fantasies and great jokes conspired to form a truly original voice. **Standout track:** "Guilty Conscience"



### JAY-Z Reasonable Doubt

*ROC-A-FELLA/PRIORITY, 1996*  
Bling before the term was invented, Brooklyn's Jay-Z dispenses over-the-top tales of his drug dealing and lush life with genuine relish. His lyrical prowess is the album's crowning jewel, kicking off one of the longest reigns in hip-hop. **Standout track:** "Brooklyn's Finest"



### EMINEM The Marshall Mathers LP

*AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE, 2000*  
Frankish but pissed, Eminem matured his comedy-psycho shtick here. He defaced teen-pop icons again but blasted critics with a humorless growl ("The Way I Am") and empathetically imagined a suicidal fan's crisis as well ("Stan"). **Standout track:** "Stan"



### JAY-Z The Blueprint

*ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM, 2001*  
Jay-Z perfected his dealer-turned-C.E.O. pose on this seesaw of sharp brags and introspection backed by soulful, sample-based beats. Arrogant yet wounded, the self-anointed King of New York's portfolio went through the roof here. **Standout track:** "Izzo (H.O.V.A.)"



### EPMD Strictly Business

*PRIORITY, 1988*  
Parrish Smith and Erick Sermon (a lispng rapper!) emerged from nowhere with endless boasts, deadpan delivery and utilitarian beats anyone could dance to. Their simple formula of tag-team rhymes and no-frills funk proved to be a timeless one. **Standout track:** "You Gots to Chill"



### LL COOL J All World: Greatest Hits

*DEF JAM, 1996*  
Hip-hop's first solo star was also its first pinup. Massaging tough boasts with a vulnerable romantic side, Cool James mixed streets and sheets without sullying either. This collection stretches from 1984's spare "I Need a Beat" to 1995's steamy "Do'In' It." **Standout track:** "Mama Said Knock You Out"



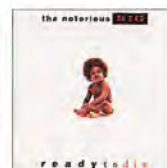
### ERIC B. & RAKIM Paid in Full

*4TH & BWAY, 1987*  
"Eric B. Is President" was the typically modest cut that introduced the world to the hugely influential Manhattan hip-hop duo Eric Barrier and William Griffin Jr. A funk-heavy collection owing much to James Brown but confidently repossessing classic riffs. **Standout track:** "Paid in Full"



### BIZ MARKIE The Best of Cold Chillin'

*LANDSPEED, 2000*  
"Just a Friend" was doughy Harlemite Biz Markie's only pop success, but the prototype human beatbox and hip-hop jokester's string of hit club singles ("Vapors," "Pickin' Boogers") proved he was more than an off-key flash in the pan. **Standout track:** "Nobody Beats the Biz"



### THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G. Ready to Die

*BAD BOY/ARISTA, 1994*  
The two best rappers of the '90s, Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur, were often hampered by underpowered production. But not here: DJ Premier and Easy Mo Bee ally Smalls's powerful thug delivery with dark, buried drums. **Standout track:** "Unbelievable"



### OL' DIRTY BASTARD Return to the 36 Chambers — The Dirty Version

*ELEKTRA, 1995*  
Wu-Tang's court jester excelled on his solo debut. Genius producer RZA mirrored the sprawling rants with lo-fi patchworks of tiny soul and dissonant funk samples. **Standout track:** "Shimmy Shimmy Ya"



**OUTKAST**  
**Aquemini**

LAFACE/ARISTA, 1998

Atlanta's brightest hone their spaced-out pimp strut on this down-home collection of dirty crunk and throw-back funk. Whether lamenting loves lost, yearning for liberation or skewering foes, Andre and Big Boi introduce mainstream rap to Southern hospitality.

**Standout track:** "Rosa Parks"  
"B.O.B."



**OUTKAST**  
**Stankonia**

LAFACE/ARISTA, 2000

On *Stankonia*, freakiness rules. Every song is a densely orchestrated orgy of musical ideas. The mandate: Keep it surreal. Hence an assault of synthesizers, Hendrix-style guitar, jackhammer drum tracks and whatever else showed up to the party looking good.

**Standout track:** "B.O.B."



**PUBLIC ENEMY**  
**It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back**

DEF JAM, 1988

The political consciousness of hip-hop would never again be as focused as this. A rap masterpiece—the Bomb Squad production melded perfectly with Chuck D's baritone and Flavor Flav's hijinks. **Standout track:** "Rebel Without a Pause"



Bob Marley & the Wailers: Cripplingly shy, Peter Tosh was hiding in the cave.



**PUBLIC ENEMY**  
**Fear of a Black Planet**

DEF JAM, 1990

Still one of the densest sounds in any genre, the Bomb Squad's production on PE's third album remains spectacularly loud. Their extreme sonic terror and Chuck D's intensity held the group's position at the forefront of hip-hop.

**Standout track:** "Fight the Power"



**BUSTA RHYMES**  
**Total Devastation: The Best of Busta Rhymes**

RHINO, 2001

This collection starts with the former Trevor Smith Jr. with Leaders of the New School and follows through the Seals & Croft—sampling hits to today's force of nature. **Standout track:** "Woo-Ha!! Got You All in Check"



**RUN-DMC**  
**Greatest Hits**

BMG HERITAGE, 2002

When Hollis, Queens's most famous residents released "It's Like That" in 1983, hip-hop was a South Bronx fledgling. By 1986, they had taken it platinum, dissing drugs on "It's Tricky" and pioneering rap-rock with Aerosmith on the epic "Walk This Way." **Standout track:** "My Adidas"



**BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB**  
**Buena Vista Social Club**

WORLD CIRCUIT/ NONESUCH, 1997

Although some in this Havana combo have been making music since before Castro, this jazzy, percussive album (midwifed by guitarist Ry Cooder) feels as fresh as a Caribbean breeze. **Standout track:** "¿Y Tú Qué Has Hecho?"



**FELA KUTI**  
**The Best Best of Fela Kuti**

MCA, 1999

World-music giant Kuti created Afrobeat—incantatory, polyrhythmic music that underscored James Brown's links to Mother Africa—to wage his struggle against Nigeria's military government. This focuses on his '70s peak. **Standout track:** "Coffin for Head of State, Pt. 2"



**BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS**  
**Catch a Fire**

ISLAND/TUFF GONG, 1973

Recorded in London, Marley's first major-label release remains one of reggae's finest. The quintet, with Peter Tosh still credited as Peter McIntosh, plays with focused restraint, soulfully underscoring politically loaded lyrics with conviction. **Standout track:** "Concrete Jungle"



**BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS**  
**Natty Dread**

ISLAND/TUFF GONG, 1974

Essentially the reggae superstar's first solo outing—with the female I-Threes in but Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer out. *Natty Dread* strikes a perfect balance between the Wailers' ghetto-rific early albums and the increasingly slick work to come. **Standout track:** "Revolution"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Fat Beats and Bra Straps: Hip-Hop Classics**

RHINO, 1998

A retrospective that goes from New York to Oakland, from the spunky sass of Roxanne Shanté to the dead-eye cool of Queen Latifah in search of hip-hop's pioneering ladies of the '80s. **Standout track:** Dimples D., "Sucker D.J.'s"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Old School Rap, Vols. 1-4 (Box Set)**

THUMP, 2000

Where hip-hop flirts with '80s dance floors (Whodini), MCs take the spotlight (Slick Rick) and sample-crazy party jams presage massive crossover hits (Tone Loc's "Wild Thing"). **Standout track:** Doug E. Fresh, "The Show"



**WU-TANG CLAN**  
**Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)**

LOUD/RCA, 1993

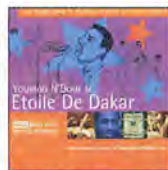
Take nine chemically imbalanced MCs, lock them in a dingy room with nothing to subsist on but weed and kung fu flicks... and you get this Staten Island, New York, crew's spare, stunning debut of space-age lo-fi funk. **Standout track:** "C.R.E.A.M."



**BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS**  
**Legend**

POLYGRAM, 1984

The collection of essential Marley, with a band that snarled as fiercely as the Stones. "Could You Be Loved," "No Woman No Cry" and the rest all show why reggae wasn't just brilliant music; it was a brilliant way of being in the world. **Standout track:** "No Woman, No Cry"



**YOUSSEU N'DOUR & ETOILE DE DAKAR**  
**Rough Guide to Youssou N'Dour & Etoile De Dakar**

WORLD MUSIC NETWORK, 2002

Eleven songs that explain why, before he hooked up with Peter Gabriel, N'Dour was the biggest star Senegal had ever seen. **Standout track:** "Wadiour"



**LEE "SCRATCH" PERRY**  
**Arkology**

ISLAND/JAMAICA, 1997

Three—"reel" study of the unhinged reggae producer who worshiped bananas and once famously recorded a tree. An essential insight into "The Upsetter's" endless recycling of skewed instrumentals and haunting roots-pop. **Standout track:** Junior Murvin, "Police & Thieves"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**The Harder They Come — Original Soundtrack**

ISLAND, 1973

The movie and its soundtrack showcased Jamaica at the height of reggae's creativity in a tale of a country boy turned bad by the hellish city of Kingston. **Standout track:** Jimmy Cliff, "Many Rivers to Cross"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
The Kings and Queens of Township Jive: The Indestructible Beat of Soweto, Vol. 1

EARTHWORKS, 1991  
The 1970s golden age of township jive joyously refuted South Africa's racial oppression. **Standout track:** Abafana Basequhdeni, "Sadlula Thina"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
The Music in My Head: Indispensable Classics & Unknown Gems From the Golden Age of Africa Pop

STERIN'S AFRICA, 1998  
A set of African classics mixing the urban and the ancient. **Standout track:** Etoile Two Thousand, "Boubou N'Gary"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Tougher Than Tough: The Story of Jamaican Music (Box Set)

MANGO/ISLAND, 1993  
The essential Jamaican box set, tracing the island's pop scene to the present via ska, rock-steady, roots, reggae, ragga, DJs and dancehall. **Standout track:** Barrington Levy, "Here I Come"



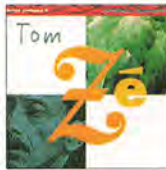
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Tropicália 30 Anos (Box Set)

POLYGRAM INTERNATIONAL, 1998  
Sixties Brazilian musicians pushed bossa nova in the direction of rock. The result was tropicália, which made stars of the likes of Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. **Standout track:** Caetano Veloso, "Soy Loco Por Ti, America"



**THE WAILERS**  
Burnin'

ISLAND/TUFF GONG, 1973  
Bob Marley wrote anthems not only for black Jamaicans but for the downtrodden everywhere, answering desperation with hope and righteous anger. The Wailers' second Island album is definitive and defiant '70s reggae from one of pop's greatest songwriters. **Standout track:** "Get Up, Stand Up"



**TOM ZÉ**  
Brazil Classics 4: The Best of Tom Zé

LUAKA BOP/WARNER BROS., 1990  
A David Byrne-compiled set of playful art-pop recorded in the '70s by a Brazilian eccentric. Poetic wordplay, invented instruments and a blithe melodic parody celebrate Brazil's musical traditions. **Standout track:** "Uil! (Voce Inventa)"



**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**  
The Complete Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2000  
Armstrong blew a hole in the jazz-trumpet rulebook. He still sounds genuinely dangerous on these '20s sides, creating the jazz solo by playing so hot that no one dared get close. **Standout track:** "West End Blues"



**CHET BAKER**  
Chet Baker Sings

PACIFIC JAZZ, 1956  
While Dizzy Gillespie & Co. blew hot wind through New York jazz clubs, Chet Baker was in California defining West Coast cool. In the mid-'50s, the only thing even remotely as mellow as Chet Baker's trumpet, and that's here too. **Standout track:** "My Funny Valentine"



**COUNT BASIE**  
The Complete Decca Recordings (1937-1939)

GRP, 1992  
Popularity would soften Basie. But here he and his big band still waved the flag for rocket-fueled Kansas City blues, out-swung their rivals and featured the best soloists around. **Standout track:** "Jumpin' at the Woodside"



**ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS**  
A Night in Tunisia

BLUE NOTE, 1960  
When it came to no-nonsense hard bop, drummer Blakey was the boss. This classic Messengers lineup gave Dizzy Gillespie's ubiquitous title track its most exciting workout on record. **Standout track:** "A Night in Tunisia"



**THE DAVE BRUBECK QUARTET**  
Time Out

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1959  
The source of the pianist's hits of the '50s, this contains "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo à la Turk," uniting hipsters and squares in admiration for Brubeck. Laconic saxophonist Paul Desmond is the olive in the martini. **Standout track:** "Take Five"



**ORNETTE COLEMAN**  
The Shape of Jazz to Come

ATLANTIC, 1959  
They say free jazz started here. Yet the biggest shock about this once-reviled record is just how accessible it now sounds. Coleman's alto sax comes straight from the blues, and the tunes are effortlessly strong. **Standout track:** "Lonely Woman"



**JOHN COLTRANE**  
A Love Supreme

IMPULSE!, 1964  
The miracle saxophonist's four-part celebration of the Creator defined the era. Black separatists embraced its riotous self-expression; hippies cried "peace" and chanted along; jazz fans heard the future. For Coltrane, it was a career mission statement. **Standout track:** "Psalm"



**CHICK COREA**  
Return to Forever

POLYGRAM, 1972  
Corea's fusion masterpiece features Brazilian husband-and-wife team Airto Moreira and Flora Purim providing pin-sharp drumming and dreamy vocals, respectively. The unnerving title track is a miracle of sustained inspiration. **Standout track:** "Return to Forever"

**ARTISTS' PICKS: 50 Cent**

→ **2PAC**  
**Makaveli: The Don Killuminati**  
DEATH ROW, 1997

"There are a lot of Tupac records I like, but this is consistent all the way through. You could put this on and clean your whole house."





**MILES DAVIS**  
Kind of Blue

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1959  
If there really is a "greatest jazz record," it might as well be this. Rejecting the modern jazz clichés of the 1950s, *Kind of Blue* takes something of a punchy, haiku approach, using the simplest ingredients to produce music of guileless honesty and Zen beauty. **Standout track:** "So What"



**MILES DAVIS**  
Sketches of Spain

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1960  
Gil Evans wrote orchestral arrangements that brought out the best in Davis: his combination of jazz spontaneity and silky-toned lyricism. The Spanish tinge to this material spotlights Davis's celebrated melancholic strain to perfection. **Standout track:** "Solea"



**MILES DAVIS**  
Bitches Brew

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1969  
Davis looked into the future and, probably to his own surprise, decided it rocked. A throbbing electric soup directed by the trumpeter in the studio but assembled in the editing room, this is the first major document of the fusion era. **Standout track:** "Miles Runs the Voodoo Down"



**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
The Complete Brunswick Recordings (1926-1931)

GRP, 1994  
He wrote the soundtrack to the Harlem Renaissance and recorded it with his Cotton Club orchestra, bringing sophistication to black urban music. **Standout track:** "Mood Indigo"



**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
Ellington at Newport

COLUMBIA, 1956  
Gifted saxophonist Paul Gonsalves's epic 27-chorus solo on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" made a Newport Jazz Festival audience hysterical and helped revitalize Ellington's flagging career. **Standout track:** "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue"



**ELLA FITZGERALD**  
Sings the Cole Porter Songbook

VERVE, 1956  
The project that kept Verve afloat and instigated the songbook-album trend is the perfect pairing. Porter's deft and witty storytelling touch is perfectly animated by Fitzgerald's effortless swing. **Standout track:** "Just One of Those Things"



**HERBIE HANCOCK**  
Head Hunters

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1973  
If Chick Corea liberated the electric piano, it was Hancock who set the synthesizer free. *Head Hunters* is a twangy, analog tour de force featuring proper jazz improvisation over beats as street as Parliament's. Jazz just doesn't get funkier than this. **Standout track:** "Chameleon"



**BILLIE HOLIDAY**  
Lady Day Swings!

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 2002  
Rubbernecker obsess over the tragedies. But don't forget that Holiday was a fabulous jazz vocalist. This compilation is what she did best: sing with an elegance and irony that could reinvent a popular song. **Standout track:** "What a Little Moonlight Can Do"



Miles Davis: "Wow, that is one nice microphone."



**KEITH JARRETT**  
The Köln Concert

ECM, 1975  
The keyboard may have been king, but Jarrett remained doggedly devoted to the acoustic piano. On *Köln*, he proved that even with an audibly poor-quality instrument, he could make warm, contemplative, folksy and accessible music. The Jarrett cult began here. **Standout track:** "Part 1"



**CHARLES MINGUS**  
The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady

IMPULSION, 1963  
Conceived as one piece but cut up by a nervy record company, Mingus's masterpiece has an 11-piece band, Ellington-style arrangements and sleeve notes by the bassist's psychiatrist. **Standout track:** "Group Dancers"



**THELONIOUS MONK**  
Genius of Modern Music Vol. 1

BLUE NOTE, 2001  
Monk's maniacal poking and thumping never sounded more radical and exciting than this, back in the '40s' bebop days, when any form of modern jazz was still unimaginably controversial. **Standout track:** "Round Midnight"



**JELLY ROLL MORTON**  
Jazz King of New Orleans

RCA, 2002  
"I myself happened to be the creator of jazz in the year 1902," wrote pianist Morton. He didn't invent jazz, but he did refine it. This post-'20s collection reveals Morton's singular vision of a jazz crafted like classical music. **Standout track:** "Doctor Jazz"



**CHARLIE PARKER**  
Best of the Complete Savoy and Dial Studio Recordings

SAVOY JAZZ, 2002  
Parker's great Savoy & Dial canon, cleverly stripped down to 20 essential tracks. Parker's white lightning alto sax still manages to take the breath away even five decades later. **Standout track:** "Ornithology"



**DJANGO REINHARDT**  
Quintette du Hot Club de France: 25 Classics 1934-1940

ASV/LIVING ERA, 1998  
Europe's first original contribution to jazz came from a gypsy guitarist whose left hand had been destroyed in a caravan fire. His florid exuberance could silence a crowd. **Standout track:** "Limehouse Blues"



**SONNY ROLLINS**  
Jazz Collection: Sonny Rollins

VERVE, 2000  
A giant saxophonist with a giant sound and a giant imagination, Sonny Rollins blew tunes apart and made something amazing from the debris. This is a collection from 1954 to 1966, his strongest period. **Standout track:** "St. Thomas"

From top: Hulton Archive; Haywood Magee/Hulton Archive



Louis Armstrong could no longer stand the sound of his neighbors' lovemaking.



**SUN RA AND HIS ARKESTRA**  
Greatest Hits: Easy Listening for Intergalactic Travel

EVIDENCE, 2000  
A 1956-'73 sample of the madness that was Ra's Arkestra ensemble. "Hits" is an exaggeration, but this focuses on the self-proclaimed space exile's most accessible work. **Standout track:** "We Travel the Spaceways"



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Roots of Jazz Funk Volume One

MVR, 1997  
If Horace Silver's "Song for My Father" sounds like Steely Dan's "Rikki Don't Lose That Number," it's because the Dan cut their teeth on groove-based jazz like this. **Standout track:** Jimmy Smith, "Back at the Chicken Shack"



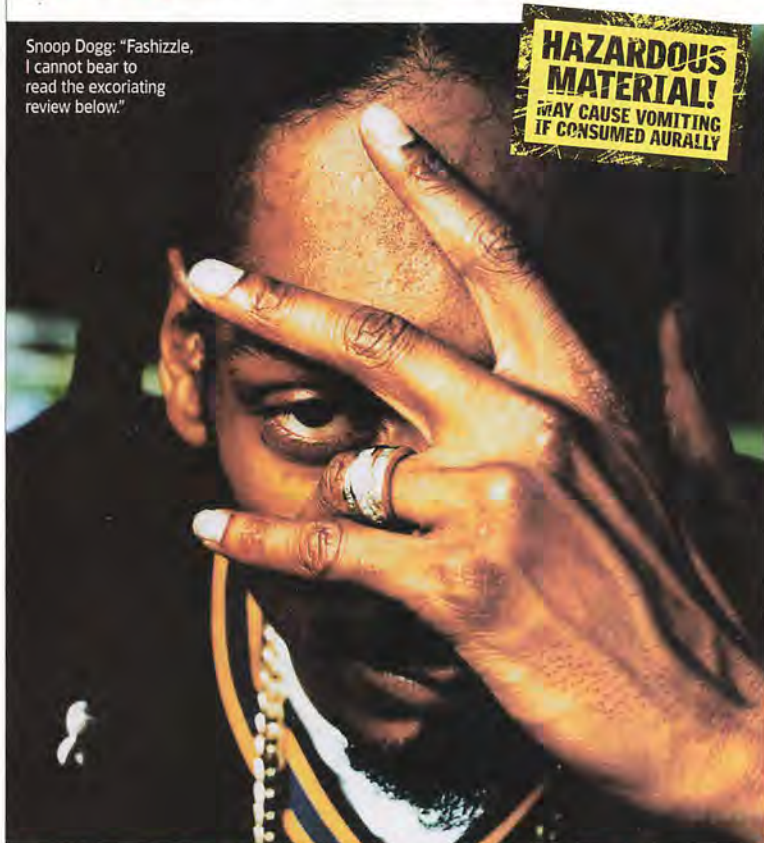
**WEATHER REPORT**  
Heavy Weather

COLUMBIA/LEGACY, 1977  
Co-leaders Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul finally carved out a proper identity for their band here. The presence of cult bassist Jaco Pastorius helped, but it was the catchier, accessible material that turned the album into a fusion best-seller. **Standout track:** "Birdland"



**JOHN ZORN**  
Naked City

ELEKTRONNESUCH, 1990  
This never pretends to be friendly. Alto saxophonist Zorn's avant-garde super-band (guitarist Bill Frisell, drummer Joey Baron) twists film music into scary shapes and improvises sub-30-second thrash-jazz blasts that contain more energy than some entire albums. **Standout track:** "Lonely Woman"



Snoop Dogg: "Fashizzle, I cannot bear to read the excoriating review below."

## AND THE 13 ALBUMS YOU SHOULDN'T TOUCH WITH A 10-FOOT POLE . . .



Hey, even great artists make absolute howlers. These albums are such terrible dogs you'll want to keep them outside in a kennel! Block up your ears — it's the worst albums ever made!



### JONI MITCHELL Travelogue

*NONESUCH, 2002*  
Hey, stuck for inspiration? Why not record 22 old songs with an orchestra? Or, according to producer Larry Klein, "recontextualize" them? Because the new versions will be self-indulgent piffle lacking the spirit, poignancy and often the tune of the originals. **Worst track:** "Be Cool"



### ELVIS PRESLEY Having Fun With Elvis On Stage

*RCA VICTOR, 1974*  
The King still had three years to live, but plainly his career was dead. "Colonel" Tom Parker had an idea: Release a live Elvis album with all the songs taken out. Thus almost 40 minutes of inane, context-free chat. **Worst track:** "Elvis Talks to the Audience"



### LOU REED Metal Machine Music

*BUDDHA, 1975*  
He's a cuddly old bear today, but in the '70s, Lou Reed was a monster. Hot on the heels of *Sally Can't Dance*, his first Top 10 album, came *Metal Machine Music*: four sides, each lasting 16 minutes and one second, of dense feedback, guitar distortion and atonal droning. **Worst track:** "A2"



### FRANK SINATRA Duets

*CAPITOL, 1993*  
Sinatra sings old songs with some acquaintances (Kenny G, Barbra Streisand, Liza, Bono). Sinatra had long since stopped caring, the guests needed a career boost and even Julio Iglesias outsang Ol' Blank Eyes. **Worst track:** "They Can't Take That Away From Me"



### SNOOP DOGG Da Game Is to Be Sold, Not to Be Told

*NO LIMIT/PRIORITY, 1998*  
Moving to Master P's No Limit label almost destroyed Snoop Dogg. He certainly embraced No Limit's core values: the cheap sleeve advertising other people's records; the cheap production; the cheap guests. Woof, woof. **Worst track:** "Doggz Gonna Get Ya"



### TIN MACHINE Tin Machine

*VIRGIN, 1989*  
Bored senseless with being David Bowie, our hero decided he wanted to be a regular guy in a regular band. Enter three drones and the name Tin Machine. They offered misfiring, feedback-drenched hard rock: part Foghat, part Sonic Youth, all dreadful. **Worst track:** "Working Class Hero"



### PETE TOWNSHEND Psychoderelict

*ATLANTIC, 1993*  
The tale of faded musician Ray High, interspersed with eulogies for Townshend's guru, Meher Baba. High's manager tries to get his career back on track by writing a song for a fake artist. Will it work out in the end? Who gives a damn? **Worst track:** "Meher Baba M5 (Vivaldi)" JOHN AIZLEWOOD



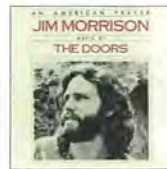
### AEROSMITH Rock in a Hard Place

*COLUMBIA, 1982*  
Joe Perry and Brad Whitford had — in many ways — gone, so Aerosmith's addled remnants sang of drugs and loose women until Steven Tyler ran out of lyrics. Then they grievously assaulted "Cry Me a River." Their worst album, but a great title. **Worst track:** "When Girls Get Together"



### THE BEACH BOYS Keepin' the Summer Alive

*CARIBOU, 1980*  
Brian Wilson was at low ebb and Carl Wilson was writing songs with BTO's Randy Bachman when they let Bruce Johnston and a slew of bored sessioners do most of the work. Though it lasts only 32 minutes, this CD over-stays its welcome. **Worst track:** "When Girls Get Together"



### THE DOORS An American Prayer

*ELEKTRA, 1978*  
As the living Doors' solo careers hurtled toward obscurity, they hit on the notion of noodling away behind recordings of Morrison chuntering some of his ghastly "poetry." This, they assumed, would resurrect their careers. They were wrong. **Worst track:** "Curses, Invocations"



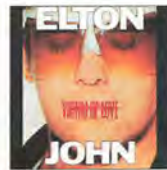
### DURAN DURAN Thank You

*CAPITOL, 1995*  
No, thank you, Duran Duran, for a covers album, always the last refuge of a washed-up act. The opening trio, "White Lines," "I Wanna Take You Higher" and "Perfect Day," does suggest their influences, but moreso how utterly unfamiliar they were with every song. **Worst track:** "911 Is a Joke"



### BOB DYLAN Dylan

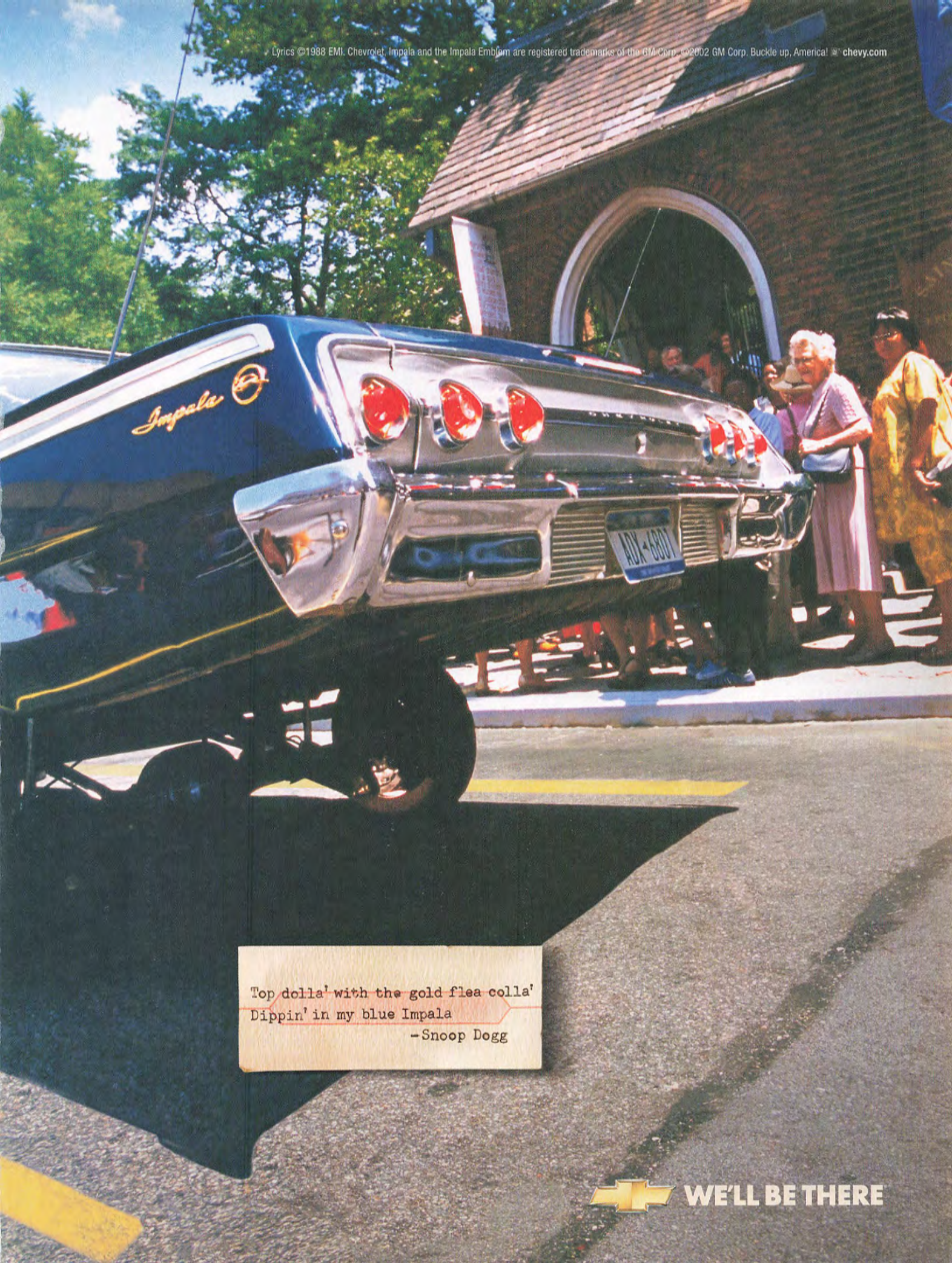
*COLUMBIA, 1973*  
Hey, record companies have feelings too. So upset was Columbia at Dylan's brief defection to Asylum that it dumped this collection of *Self Portrait* outtakes on a market gullible enough to send any crap into the Top 20. Not even hardcore Dylanphiles like this one. **Worst track:** "Mr. Bojangles"



### ELTON JOHN Victim of Love

*MCA, 1979*  
Head over heels in love with cocaine, John turned for career nourishment to the disco boom. Alas, he was no more a disco bunny than Gerald Ford was, and the result was his lowest-selling album. It's such a dog, it's a wonder Sir Elton didn't start barking halfway through. **Worst track:** "Johnny B. Goode"





*Impala* 

ADX-6807

Top dolla' with the gold flea colla'  
Dippin' in my blue Impala  
-Snoop Dogg



**WE'LL BE THERE**

## LIFE AT THE TOP!

Who can blame **Good Charlotte** for celebrating? After an abusive dad, a hardscrabble childhood and high school rejection, the chart-topping mall punks are enjoying the fruits of their labor — and groupies! “We are not,” they tell *Blender*, “your typical Christians.”

BY NICK DUERDEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PEROU

# “We’ve Made It!”

★ THEY ARE DIFFICULT to miss, the Good Charlotte twins. The 24-year-olds — Joel and Benji Madden — shuffle through a London hotel lobby in three-quarter-length shorts, bandannas and lurid tattoos that explode all across their bodies. They look toxic. If their mother were nearby, she’d tell them to stand up straight. But she isn’t, so they slouch in studied perfection.

Joel collapses into his chair first, all handshakes and smiles, but Benji can’t quite lose the frown. His mouth is curled up into a citric sneer that suggests he’s just sucked on a lemon, and his body language speaks volumes: arms crossed, left leg over right, steadfastly avoiding eye contact. Something clearly is bugging him, but he won’t say what. He deigns to smile only when *Blender* alerts him to the admonishing stares he’s receiving from the hotel’s otherwise decidedly sophisticated clientele.

“Well, that’s good,” he says, brightening. As he talks, his teeth clack on his three lip rings. “I’m here to piss people

off. I love walking into places like this and freaking everybody out.”

Life, he says, has always been this way for him. “Back in school, you start off wanting to blend in, make friends and get invited to all the right parties. But that never really happened to me, and you know what? I got over it. I’m comfortable with who I am now, and my tattoos are a big part of that. It’s my entire identity.”

He holds up his hands, both covered in permanent ink. “Look at my knuckles,” he says. “Every time I shake someone’s hand or pay a bill, people see the tattoos and react. I’m glad. Being this way separates me from everybody else.” He reclines, visibly thawing. “And if people don’t like it?” Up comes the middle finger.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GOOD CHARLOTTE, a boisterous punk quartet from Maryland, are part of a growing trend in American music. They’re the flip side to the sort of kids who dominated music just a few years ago, those well-behaved school-play leads and class presidents who considered the prom to be — well, gosh — another high point in an already blessed life. Alongside fellow tattoo enthusiasts Blink-182 and Sum 41 (and

forefathers the Offspring and Green Day), they’re the classroom geeks and square pegs who, shrewdly, subsequently decided to turn their social-pariah status to their benefit. Alienation has made them rich and famous. Girls who once ridiculed them in school are now desperate for their company.

“That’s funny,” Benji says. “It’s so fucked up. I go to clubs these days, and every girl in the joint wants to talk to me and laughs at my jokes whether they’re funny or not.” While he admits to finding gorgeous girls attractive, he does try to keep his libido in check. Instead of sleeping with them, he makes fun of them. “They deserve it, stupid bitches.”

Good Charlotte — vocalist Joel and guitarist Benji, plus guitarist Billy Martin and bassist Paul Thomas (along with touring drummer Chris Wilson) — first came together in 1996 out of a collective love for Rancid and Nirvana. Four years later, they released their self-titled debut



Good Charlotte:  
“We’re melting!”



Good Charlotte, clockwise from left: Joel Madden, Billy Martin, Benji Madden, Paul Thomas

album, which slowly clawed its way toward 80,000 copies sold. The band was jubilant (80,000, after all, is a whole lot of people), but their record company, Epic, was less so. The label thought Good Charlotte had the potential to tap into the zeitgeist more forcefully, and for their career to go properly supernova. It instructed them to tour endlessly.

"We've always been very aware that all this could end tomorrow," says Joel, the more sensible of the two. "You know, bands come and go these days so quickly. So any money we made along the way, we've put aside, we've invested. You never know, do you?"

Hindsight has shown they didn't need to be so prudent. Late last year they released *The Young and the Hopeless*, 45 minutes of brisk mall-punk chaos, its melodic exclamation points offset by some very bleak lyrical tales. Propelled by the joyous single "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" — and given a considerable boost by MTV, which gave the twins their own show, *All Things Rock*, to host — it has powered past the 1 million sales mark in just four months.

"We've made it, and it's still sinking in, to be honest," Benji says. "A big surprise. I don't know — I guess I always expected everybody to hate us." He shrugs, and the flame-red

tattoo on his neck creeps toward his ear. "But my philosophy is this: The more people talk about us, the better we must be doing. And right now, people are talking about us a whole lot."

\*\*\*\*\*

STRIP THE band's second album of its music and concentrate solely on the lyrics, and you'll find an avalanche of dysfunction that could fill an entire season of *Jerry Springer* before Oprah came along to mop up the tears. It goes something like this: The Madden twins were terrible students ("High school felt more to me like a jail cell in a penitentiary" — "The Anthem"), and they never had much luck with the opposite sex ("Girls don't like boys/They like cars and money" — "Girls & Boys"). Their early life was dictated by religion — Mom was a strict Christian — and, according to the twins, their father cheated on her



repeatedly. On the album's most meditative track, "Emotionless," Joel sings, "It's been a long, hard road without you

by my side/Why weren't you there on the nights that we cried/You broke my mother's heart, you broke your children for life/It's not OK, but we're all right."

If, using the galaxy as a scale, happiness is Mercury, the Madden twins currently reside somewhere beyond Neptune.

"By the time we turned 15, 16, we were getting into full-blown fights with him," Joel says of their father. "He would go off with some other woman for a couple of months, then come back as if nothing had happened. We were like, 'Fuck you, you can't just come walking back.' So we tried to beat him up. →



## GOOD CHARLOTTE

We were pretty pissed — we were terrified as well, but pretty pissed. One time he upset my mom real bad, so we took a baseball bat to his truck.” Their father finally walked out for good a year later. They haven’t seen him since.

However, some benefit has come out of all of this. Joel insists that, as a direct consequence of their one-parent-family status, they became independent and strong. “You survive that kind of childhood — hitting rock bottom, having nothing, no money — and you can survive anything,” he says. Both took Saturday jobs to help pay the bills, and they did everything they could to ensure that their sister, Sarah, 18 months their junior, didn’t suffer too much from the split. Family life continued, occasionally resembling a kind of normalcy. If their mother was strict — very strict — she was only trying to protect them, convinced that rock music would ultimately lead them astray. She banned everything other than Christian music in their house, and when a Beastie Boys poster first found its way onto Joel and Benji’s bedroom wall, she quickly ripped it down.

“She wanted us to be more religious than we turned out, I guess,” Benji says with a sheepish smile. “We do have a lot of faith in God, and I attribute everything we have to Him, but there’s no way that either of us could do with going to church on a regular basis. We are not your typical



Good Charlotte decline “Say cheese!” request.

Christians by any means at all, but I do try to do good by people. That’s my religious effort.”

He gazes out the window in momentary contemplation, pulling his lip by one of the rings until it snaps back into place, saliva flying.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FIVE HOURS later, Good Charlotte are assembled on the cramped stage of London’s Mean Fiddler in front of 500 Avril Lavignes and

**“One time Dad upset Mom real bad, so we took a baseball bat to his truck.”**



their sk8er bois, tearing through a hyperactive 75-minute set with boundless energy. They are dressed exclusively in black, and while their music bears considerable resemblance to that of their pop-punk peers, they refrain from burping or farting into their microphones and don’t encourage any girls to bare their boobies, a proud Blink-182 tradition. Nevertheless, rumors persist that they’re quite happy to share Sum 41’s European groupies.

“Don’t look at me,” Joel says innocently after the show. “I don’t go there. But Benji does. Benji is definitely far more out-of-control than me.”

Benji, still breathless from the exertions of the performance, nods eagerly. “Everything I do, I tend to do to the very maximum. Drink, drugs and girls. I tend to get excessive.” How excessive, exactly? “Um . . .” He pauses, and his finger pulls at the lip ring again. “Let’s just say things got pretty bad, but I pulled myself back from the edge eventually. I don’t drink anymore, and I don’t do drugs.”

*Which leaves just the girls.*

“Well, we do have fun on the road from time to time, but not like before. Take tonight, for example. We’re both hungry, and I’m in the mood for some Indian food. All four of us will go find a restaurant, and then it’s straight back to the hotel, to bed.” He leans in close, as if to share a secret.

“You know what’s the worst thing anybody could say about us? The biggest put-down? That we’re *rock stars*.” He makes a face. “Urg.” [BLENDER]



Spelling can be fun!

## CHARLOTTE: GOOD OR BAD? YOU DECIDE!



Sure, **Good Charlotte** are good. But what about other Charlottes? Hmm?

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY CANDACE BUSHNELL

**She’s good because:** She wrote the literature classic *Jane Eyre*.

**She’s bad because:** *Jane Eyre*’s subtext suggests that the only good man is a castrated man.

**Verdict:** BAD CHARLOTTE!

### CHARLOTTE RAMPLING NUDITY-FRIENDLY BRIT ACTRESS

**She’s good because:** In her ’70s heyday, she could be relied on to enliven even the dulllest art-house movie by taking her clothes off.

**She’s bad because:** She appeared in *Max, Mon Amour*, an awful film even by the demanding standards of the monkey-romance genre.

**Verdict:** GOOD CHARLOTTE!

### CHARLOTTE CHURCH YOUTHFUL WELSH WAILER

**She’s good because:** She has a beautiful, angelic voice.

**She’s bad because:** Like endless renditions of “Ave Maria”? You’d better.

**Verdict:** BAD CHARLOTTE!



Charlotte Rampling models new Bangkok police uniform.

### CHARLOTTE’S WEB ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHILDREN’S CLASSIC

**It’s good because:** Pre-*Harry Potter*, it was the most beloved children’s book of all time.

**It’s bad because:** It teaches little kids that pigs can be your best friends rather than being bacon. *Mmm . . .* bacon.

**Verdict:** GOOD CHARLOTTE!

### CHARLOTTE RAE FACTS OF LIFE FACTOTUM

**She’s good because:** She played lovely Edna Garrett on *Diff’rent Strokes* spinoff *The Facts of Life*.

**She’s bad because:** *The Facts of Life* reeked.

**Verdict:** BAD CHARLOTTE!

### CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA HOME OF THE MINT MUSEUM OF CRAFT AND DESIGN

**It’s good because:** If you want a town with a lot of furniture factories, Charlotte’s very much your place.

**It’s bad because:** Who wants that?

**Verdict:** BAD CHARLOTTE!

CLARK COLLIS

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Win for the glory*



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for the new season.



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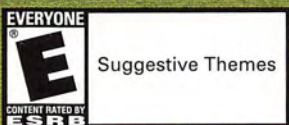
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PlayStation 2

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# Drugstore Cowgirl



She's the beautiful rock & roll daughter of American music legends Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash who once bragged about putting "the *cunt* back in country." But then booze and heroin and hard-partying boyfriends took their toll, and **Carlene Carter** fell off the face of the earth. And then tragedy *really* struck. . . .

BY WILLIAM SHAW



ON A DARK Wednesday evening last November, a couple is having a flaming fight outside a restaurant bar in downtown Nashville.

She is a willowy 47-year-old. He is 21, blond-haired and blue-eyed. Despite their 26-year age difference, they are lovers, engaged to be married.

He is a young waiter at a slightly faded bar, 12th & Porter, where drinks are served under paintings of Eminem and Kurt Cobain.

She, on the other hand, is a country-music star. Or at least was. Twenty-five years ago, when female country singers still wore sexless gowns and sang about standing by your man, Carlene Carter was a feisty, miniskirted beauty who stood onstage one night in New York and introduced a song with the words "If this doesn't put the *cunt* back into country, nothing will." In the late '70s and early '80s, in the wake of punk's whirlwind, she bolted Nashville for London and recorded groundbreaking country-rock albums with her then-husband, Nick Lowe, that stood the demure image of female country singers on its head.

What this unlikely couple has in common this evening is that each of them is drunk. Very, very drunk.

Carter gets into a black 1985 Mercedes-Benz and drives off, leaving her boyfriend, Francis Reidy, at the bar. The car is registered in her stepfather's name: Johnny Cash.

Drunk and lacking a ride, Reidy walks away from the bar, down past Jerry's Auto Glass. At 7:40 P.M., drivers report seeing a man standing on the on-ramp of nearby Interstate 40, apparently trying to flag down vehicles. From there he walks onto the highway itself.

Detective Charles Robinson told *Blender*: "Reidy was walking in and out of traffic, waving his arms. Then he moved into traffic and just stood there."

Francis Reidy was holding his hands in front of him, as though he was trying



↓ The Man in Black Tie: Johnny Cash and his stepdaughter, Carlene Carter, 1978

to stop the speeding Chevy Tahoe when it struck him.

For four days, Reidy's body lay unidentified in the morgue. He had no ID. All the police had to go on was his tattoos. The one on his left arm read THE LUCK OF THE IRISH.

Reidy's luck was lousy. As he strode out onto the freeway, perhaps hoping to find a ride, Carter was on her way back to the bar to collect him.

The only trouble was, she was driving under the influence. Traveling down Lebanon Pike, the Cash family's Mercedes swerved and swiped the rear end of another car. Carter sped away from the accident, but, too drunk to control her car, she veered off the highway and crashed into a utility pole.

But Carter hadn't hit bottom yet. One month later, she was arrested and charged with identity theft. Police allege she was filling her dead fiancé's prescriptions for the antidepressant Zoloft.

Carter's troubles soon made the tabloid pages of the *National Enquirer* and

the *Globe*, the lurid tale reading something like one of her stepfather's more blackhearted ballads.

With unusual bluntness, Carter's stepsister, the singer Rosanne Cash, told *Blender*, "Unfortunately, the tabloids have been all too correct in documenting the recent circumstances of her life. Carlene's entire life — not just her career — has spectacularly exploded."



"I HAVEN'T TALKED to anybody since this happened," drawls the voice on the other end of the telephone. "And there has been a lot of really weird press. I figure it's best to be honest."

For an hour and a half, Carlene Carter talks. She laughs a lot, remembering the past, though there's a world-weariness in her voice when she recounts the past few years. "I'm talking openly with you because I'd rather the truth be out — because people presume a lot."

Carter was born with the musical equivalent of a silver spoon in her mouth. She is Nashville royalty: Her grandmother, guitar-strumming Maybelle, was one-third of the original Carter Family, which along with Jimmie Rodgers can rightfully lay claim to having invented country music. The title of the Carter Family's most famous song, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," has become country's quasi-religious rallying call. It's carved in huge letters into the walls of the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Carlene's father is Carl Smith, a honky-tonk country singer and drinking buddy of Johnny Cash's, who notched more than 30 Top 10 hits in the 1950s. He and Carlene's mother, June Carter, divorced when Carlene was 2. June then married Johnny Cash, for whom she wrote "Ring of Fire." Nashville wouldn't be Nashville without the Carters.

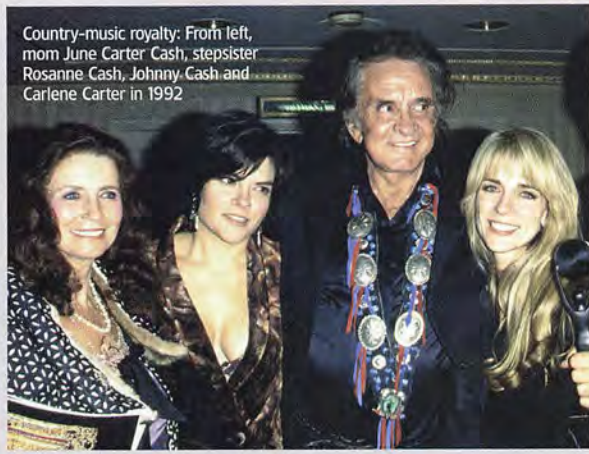
Carlene grew up in the Cashes' wooden house tucked away in a fold of the banks of Old Hickory Lake, in Hendersonville, Tennessee, where people like

**"Carlene's entire life — not just her career — has spectacularly exploded."**



"Country with brass ovaries": Carter, here in 1980, rewrote the sexual rulebook for women in country.

Country-music royalty: From left, mom June Carter Cash, stepsister Rosanne Cash, Johnny Cash and Carlene Carter in 1992



brass ovaries." She became a fixture on the rowdy-but-hip London pub-rock scene, marrying the movement's head boy, Nick Lowe. She turned her back on Crowell's suggestions for studio sidemen and recorded her self-titled debut with proto-punks Graham Parker and the Rumour as her backing band. "England gave me the freedom not to have to fit into any mold," she says.

Parker remembers the sessions with some bemusement. "All I knew of Johnny Cash was 'A Boy Named Sue,'" he says, "which seemed like a typical English novelty hit. In other words, Carlene's connections didn't impress me."

Which was just fine by Carter. At the time, her Nashville connections didn't impress her much either — only later would she come to respect what she had grown up with. "The funny thing is, I didn't know much about country at all until I met [Welsh guitarist] Dave Edmunds," she recalls. "I learned about it from him. The first thing he said to me was, 'Do you know George Jones?'"

Carter's second album, 1979's *Two Sides to Every Woman*, slid past unnoticed, but the following year her new husband took control of her third record, *Musical Shapes*. This time she truly hit her stride. One critic hailed *Musical Shapes* as "perhaps the greatest fusion of rock and country since the days of rockabilly."

"What the Dixie Chicks are doing now," says Carter's friend and manager, Ann Munday, "Carlene was doing 20 years ago." For the first time, her albums were selling respectably in America too.

That was around the time she uttered her infamous line about putting "the cunt back into country" at the Bottom Line, a club in New York. Nashville was predictably horrified — and so were June and Johnny, who had sneaked into the show to see their daughter play. They walked out, shocked.

Carter's wild-and-blue streak soon eclipsed her successes. She had first tasted alcohol young — Grandma

Kris Kristofferson and Bob Dylan would drop by to ask Johnny and June's opinion of the new songs "Me and Bobby McGee" and "Lay Lady Lay." But it was the rock acts that really wowed the teenage Carlene. "When Derek and the Dominoes arrived to play on John's TV show, I lost my mind!" she says.

Despite their iconic status, the Cashes were hardly the most straitlaced people. Johnny, Carlene's stepfather, struggled with addiction for years. And from the beginning, Carlene exhibited an exuberant lust for life. As one Nashville friend recalls with affection, "She sure was a loudmouth." At 15, she dropped out of high school — where she was a cheerleader — when she became pregnant with a daughter, Tiffany. She married the father, Joe Simpkins. They moved into a trailer behind Johnny and June's house but split two years later. By 22, Carter had been married and divorced again, this time to songwriter Jack Routh, with

whom she had a son, John Jackson.

By the time she was 21, she was hanging out in bars around Nashville, telling people she was Calhoun Cartier, a stripper-turned-singer from Los Angeles. "Nashville really wasn't me," she says.

Carter never did quite mesh with her conservative hometown. At a time when Nashville was at its most staid, London was at its wildest. In 1977, Rodney Crowell, Rosanne Cash's future husband, took her there to record her debut album. This was the punk era. Carter loved it.

Dressed in her trademark miniskirts and loud cowboy boots, she used to laugh riotously and call her music "country with

**"Heroin just crept up on me, and the next thing I knew, it had me."**



Maybelle used to sneak her glasses of wine even before she was a teen. London is a heavy-drinking city, and she and Lowe happily joined in. "Basically, I think we're both alcoholics," she said at the time. "I do think every day about a drink."

And as Carter's drinking increased, her drug use escalated. Her next two albums sold poorly. Under the weight of her drinking, her newfound fondness for cocaine and an ectopic pregnancy that almost killed her, her marriage to Nick Lowe crumbled.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WITH HER SOLO career faltering and her personal life in shambles, Carter rejoined her mother in the Carter Family, returning to her roots both musically and geographically. She kicked alcohol. She came home with something to prove. She had squandered her rock career. Now it was time to start again.

A close friend, A&R consultant Tracy Gershon — sister of actress Gina — suggested that Carter start writing with a mutual friend, Howie Epstein, the bassist in Tom Petty's band, the Heartbreakers. At the time, Nick Hunter was a senior vice president at Warner Bros., Carter's label. Her single-mindedness, he says, made it difficult for her to find the right collaborator. "But she and Howie? The two of them made a whole."

"Carlene went to work with Howie, and that was it," Gershon says. "They clicked."

As with Lowe before, she fell in love with her cowriter. From two albums with Epstein — 1990's *I Fell in Love* and 1993's *Little Love Letters* — she scored hits with the upbeat country songs "I Fell in Love" and "Every Little Thing." With Epstein by her side, Carter worked hard to regain the affection of a town she had once turned her back on.

But then life began to unravel once again. Her 1995 album, *Little Acts of Treason*, sold poorly. Though it featured some of her best songwriting, it didn't possess the cheery hit that country radio had come to expect from her. "They liked me to be this wacky-cheerleader kind of



Free-falling: Former Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers bassist Howie Epstein, circled, in March 2002

thing," Carter says wryly.

Her determination to succeed placed huge pressure on her relationship with Epstein. "I was burned," she admits. "From 1988 to 1996, I worked my ass off. On average, I was gone 300 days a year. One year I saw Howie only 27 days."

To make matters worse, she adds, Epstein, at home in New Mexico, had started using heroin.

In 1996, exhausted, she embarked on an all-female tour, the first of its kind, with Pam Tillis and Lori Morgan. Rumors spread that Carter was taking drugs.

"Actually," Carter says, "it was right after the tour that my drug habit got really out of whack. I had a really bad depression, and I went back to my old ways. Howie was having his problems with addiction, and two years after he'd started, I just finally started too."

Carter and Epstein disappeared to their house in Tesuque, New Mexico, outside Santa Fe. Gradually, many of the people they had known in Nashville stopped hearing from them. "Heroin just crept up on me, and the next thing I knew, it had me," she says.

Looking back, she still finds it strange that she was a heroin addict. "I've always been a party girl," she says. "Even when I was sober I was a party girl. Heroin was something I was not really into — it's not a social drug. But it had a lot to do with coping with the relationship I was in, living with someone who was doing it every day." She pauses. "I'm not blaming him," she adds. "It was me. . . . But it's really hard."

Gershon recalls that at the time, Carter occasionally phoned her from New Mexico. Gershon once asked her point-blank: "Are you OK?"

"I'm good," Carter said, bluffing.

She told Gershon she had some new songs. She said she and Epstein were going to get married.

She said everything was fine.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FOR FIVE YEARS, Carter disappeared off the radar. Vanished. MIA.

Colleagues asked where she had gone. Nashville DJs wondered on the air:

"Whatever happened to Carlene Carter?" Fans were baffled. One set up a Web site called *Hunting for Carlene*, hoping someone would spot her. No one did.

No one, that is, until around 9:30 P.M. on June 26, 2001, when police in Albuquerque stopped a speeding gold Jeep Cherokee. In it, they found three grams of black-tar heroin and a "large amount of drug paraphernalia." They discovered that a Santa Fe car dealership had reported the Jeep stolen three months earlier.

Carter's passenger was Howie Epstein. They were racing to catch a plane so Epstein could make it to a Heartbreakers show. In news photos, Carter, then 45, looked haggard. It became dimly apparent where those missing years had gone.

There had been other clues to Carter's graceless fall even before the heroin bust. In 2001, a Santa Fe dog kennel sued her for leaving four dogs in their care for over a year and failing to claim them. A week before her drug bust, she was arrested in Santa Fe for failing to appear in court to face a bad-check charge.

Carter told the police the heroin was hers. "To try and keep Howie his job," she says.

That didn't work. For Epstein, the bust was a disaster. It ended his 20 years with the Heartbreakers. The band issued a statement that he had departed because of "ongoing personal problems."

Carter and Epstein's 13-year relationship broke apart, too. Each blamed the other for the predicament; Carter still

## THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL >>>

Carlene Carter's wayward life reads like a song by her stepfather, Johnny Cash



**1955** Rebecca Carlene Smith is born in Nashville on September 26 to June Carter and **CARL SMITH**



**1965** Famed rockabilly guitarist **CARL PERKINS** teaches Carlene, 10, the B-minor chord

**1968** The Man in Black becomes her stepfather.



**1971** Only 15, Carlene marries Joe Simpkins . . .

**1973** . . . and divorces Joe Simpkins . . .

**1975** . . . and marries Jack Routh . . .

**1977** . . . and divorces Jack Routh.

**1977** She signs to Warner Bros. in L.A., but flees to London to record her debut, *Carlene Carter*, with **GRAHAM PARKER'S** band.



**1980** Her third album, *MUSICAL SHAPES*, includes the prophetic cover of the Carter Family classic "Too Drunk (To Remember)."

**1979** Wins Quote of the Year in *Playboy* for her infamous remark about putting "the cunt back into country."

**1980** Her husband, **NICK LOWE**, charts with "Cruel to Be Kind." The video includes scenes of the couple's wedding.





Last call: 12th & Porter, the Nashville bar near which Carter's fiancé, Francis Reidy, was killed



↑ Francis Reidy in his 1999 high school graduation photo

Reidy says. "Obviously she was distraught and upset. But beyond that, we don't know anything."



CARTER'S PLUNGE continued remorselessly. Police claim that in Reidy's absence, she began calling in his prescription for Zoloft to a Hendersonville pharmacist.

"It's not true," Carter insists.

She maintains that a family assistant had assumed the prescriptions were hers and called them in. She's fighting the case. "It's totally bogus. Why would I steal Francis's identity?" she says.

While the charge winds through the courts, Carter has moved back into the sanctuary of Johnny Cash and June Carter's home: "It was too painful to stay in the house that Francis and I lived in."

Carter does not want to be seen as a victim. "It's been sad, but I've still got my health," she says, adding that she's clean again and determined to stay that way.

A few days earlier, Rosanne Cash had told *Blender*, "Her addiction is all-encompassing and unspeakably destructive, not only to herself, but to our entire extended family. She is without a moral center at this time in her life."

Carter responds incredulously. "It's nothing like that," she says. "She's very weird. I've never been anything but sweet to her, but she's been kind of hard on me for years." She laughs loudly. "She's got problems, not me."

Meanwhile, Carter has been writing again. Before Reidy's death, she had recorded a jingle for a Nike ad, reuniting with her old musical sparring partner Dave Edmunds. She's recording the appropriately titled "I've Always Been Crazy" for a tribute album to the late Waylon Jennings. She has also recorded 23 songs for her mother's new album. And June and Carlene are going on tour again this spring.

She says she'll start recording her own material soon, too. "I'm OK," she says wryly. "Not great. But I'm OK." [BLENDER]

Additional reporting by Chuck Aly

**"I didn't drink for 15 years until last fall. And it ended up in catastrophe."**



feels he's not accepting responsibility for what happened to them. "I can't see that I could ever go back to working with Howie again," she says. (Epstein could not be reached for comment.)

Nearly a year after the bust, in the spring of 2002, Carter checked into court-ordered rehab in Tennessee. There, she met a 21-year-old named Francis Reidy III. Reidy, who had struggled with alcoholism, was in rehab of his own volition. He was six feet tall, a popular, gregarious baseball fan.

It may have been an unlikely affair — she was more than twice his age; he was younger than both of her children — but Carter and Reidy fell in love. Reidy's parents were understandably nervous about the liaison, but as they put it, he was a man now. Besides, he called them almost every day, and one thing was obvious: He was happy.

As before for Carlene, returning to her family was part of the healing process. Last September, she joined other members of the Carter Family onstage at the Americana Music Awards in Nashville. Her daughter, Tiffany Lowe, eight months pregnant, was onstage as well. With the birth of Tiffany's daughter,

Kai, Carter became a grandmother. Tracy Gershon talked to Tiffany. "Mom's straight," the daughter said happily. "Mom's doin' well."

Back in Tennessee, Carter and Reidy lived together north of Hendersonville, near the sprawling Cash estate where Carter had grown up. They even discussed marriage.

But then Carter fell off the wagon again. A few days after the Americana Awards, Carter and Reidy visited his hometown, La Plata, Maryland. Drinkers at a local bar were astonished to discover a country star among them — a very drunk country star at that. "I didn't drink for 15 years until last fall," she says bitterly. "And it ended up in catastrophe."

At home in La Plata two months after their son's death, Francis Reidy's parents are still shocked and bewildered by their sudden loss, by the reporters who badgered them even before their son was buried, by the tabloids' description of him as a "toy boy."

"He was a good-natured person who unfortunately had a problem with alcohol," his father, Francis Reidy Jr., insists. "And who tried to overcome it."

Neither Carlene Carter nor any representative of the Carter family has been in touch with the Reidys to explain what happened the night their son died, to fill in the blanks for them. The Reidys are clearly upset by this. They want to know; they feel they owe it to their son. "Carlene was here when Francis was buried,"

Paula George (left), courtesy of La Plata High School (Reidy), London Weekend Television (top features) (Dove), still-likes: Altonrose, Polymonde (3)

**1983**  
Her synth-pop album *C'est C Bon* flops.



**1985**  
Her country career apparently over, Carter appears alongside songbird **KIKI DEE** in the London stage musical *Pump Boys and Dinettes*.

**1989**  
Returns to Nashville. Re-signs with Warner Bros.

**1990**  
"I Fell in Love" is a number 3 hit. Her album includes "You Are the One," written by

**1993**  
Her seventh CD, *Little Love Letters*, produces the hit "Every Little Thing."

**1996**  
She joins the **KRAFT** Country tour with Lori Morgan and Pam Tillis. Rumors spread about her alleged heroin use.



**1998**  
The Cash family gathers as Johnny Cash is near death. Carter is conspicuous by her absence.

**1999**  
Carter and boyfriend Howie Epstein drop off four dogs at a Santa Fe, New Mexico, kennel — and don't bother to pick them up.



**2001**  
On June 26, Carter is busted for **HEROIN** possession. In December, a warrant is issued for her arrest after she fails to turn up for an arraignment hearing.

**2002**  
Carter checks into court-ordered rehab, where she meets Francis Reidy.

**2002**  
Reidy, now her fiancé, is struck by a car and killed near a Nashville bar after a night of drinking and fighting with Carter.

**2002**  
Carter is arrested for identity theft after allegedly filling a **ZOLOFT** prescription in her dead fiancé's name. *WILLIAM SHAW*



A TEST OF HUMAN NATURE!



12:40 PM >>

Interpol, from left: Paul Banks, Daniel Kessler, Sam Fogarino, Carlos D.

**SPEND OUR CASH!**

→ THE BAND  
**Interpol**

→ THE MISSION  
To spend \$848 in one day any way they want

→ THE REASON  
*Blender* asked them to!



# “Decadence Is Fun!”

Can suited gloom-rockers **Interpol** blow \$848 of *Blender's* cash on a day of rock & roll debauchery without at least one of them collapsing? No!

BY CLARK COLLIS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVAN KAFKA

★ “TODAY,” DECLARES Interpol drummer Sam Fogarino, “I think we should be very, very decadent.”

Who can begrudge him such aspirations? This is the hotly tipped indie-rockers' last day in their native New York for the foreseeable future. This evening, the quartet, three of whom are currently standing in the office of their record company on a chilly Manhattan morning, will fly across the Atlantic and then embark on an old-fashioned drive-all-day, play-every-night van tour of drizzly Great Britain.

Faced with such imminent deprivations, it's unsurprising that when *Blender* offered them \$848 to spend however they like, downtown's favorite sons opted for a day of spoiled excess: fine wines. Haute cuisine. Comely masseuses.

Actually, the band has already jumped the gun on excess, having spent the previous evening and, in some cases, part of this morning celebrating their

manager's birthday. Singer Paul Banks, 24, is now, as always, immaculately attired. But his bloodshot eyes and monosyllabic mumbling tell a different story. Meanwhile, bassist Carlos D., 28 — he of the unnervingly Hitlerian haircut — is nowhere to be seen.

“He has no phone and no apartment and was out all night,” says the band's publicist with a grimace.

Luckily, just as the rest are about to give up and make their way down to our waiting stretch limo, Carlos appears, clutching a pair of plastic bags.

“These contain the essence of my being!” he announces theatrically before turning his attention to the worse-for-the-wear Banks.

“Paul hasn't slept at all,” Carlos notes. “He may not be able to speak. I may have to translate.”

“I feel pretty good,” the singer wheezes mournfully.

In fact, having secured his seat in the limousine, Banks rallies a little, helping



“You're right — vodka does taste better when warmed between the thighs!”



himself to some vodka as we head to Manhattan's ultraswank 21 Club restaurant. The four look strangely at home in the 74-year-old eatery, dressed as they are in the sharp suits that set them apart from the common rock herd almost as much as their intense, Joy Division-esque songs do.

"It's not like we have fashion meetings," protests Daniel Kessler, 27, Interpol's guitarist and the most loquacious member of the group. "There are no rules. It just so happens that the four of us like fitted suits."

The 21 Club more than lives up to its high-society reputation — it is lavish of décor, waitstaff and especially price.

"I'm going to order the \$26 cheeseburger," Banks announces between sips of his \$110-a-bottle Moët & Chandon champagne.

"And then send it back!" Carlos says, laughing.

"Yes," agrees the singer. "And then order a \$27 cheeseburger."

In the end, Fogarino, 34, goes for the burger, while Banks orders some pasta before making his way to the restroom. The rest of the band, meanwhile, mulls over the past year, during which they've been transformed from just another bunch of New York scenester hopefuls to globetrotting rock stars.

"It's been a welcome surprise," Kessler says. "And we get very detailed letters from fans."

"This one fan sent a letter to a venue we were playing in Hamburg actually apologizing for not coming to the show," Carlos recalls. "But then I saw the same

letter in the office addressed to another band. The *hussy!*"

It has now been 15 minutes since Banks left the table. Interpol's publicist decides a rescue mission might be in order. He returns with unpleasant news: "He's throwing up."

"Drinking on an empty stomach," Carlos sighs. "It's never a good idea, is it?"

Five minutes later, the news gets worse: "He's collapsed unconscious. I've banged on the door, but I can't wake him up. I think we'll have to tear off the door."

Then still worse: "He's awake, but . . . well, I'd better get him out of here."

And so Banks's role in the band's day of decadence ends in curtailed (if appropriate) fashion. Gamely, the remaining three agree to continue, even though it's difficult to keep them from worrying about their fallen comrade.

That is, until lunch arrives.

"This is the best burger I've ever tasted," Fogarino proclaims. "The more you get into it, the better it becomes. It's not like a burger at all. It's like a good cut of meat. I can't believe it, but it's actually

worth the money."

Gallantly, given the recent restroom ruckus, the staff at 21 Club treats its celebrity guests to complimentary dessert and even sticks the remains of Fogarino's burger in a doggy bag. ("It's for my wife," he says. "It'll be the best cold burger she's ever had in her life!")

Next up is a quick stop at Sam Ash, a music store where Fogarino buys an electronic drum tuner. Kessler pleads for money to purchase an e-bow. An e-what?

"It gives the guitar this weird, ethereal violin sound. It's really cool, and I've never

been able to afford it. Can I get it? Can I? Please, please, *pleeeeeease?*"

Well, OK.

"Thanks, Dad! Ha ha ha!"

With time ticking away before the three must reunite with Banks and head for the airport (Kessler: "Do they let you carry people onto a plane?"), Carlos begs off further activities to go pack. Meanwhile, Fogarino and Kessler decide to spend the remainder of the dough on a massage in Koreatown. Unfortunately, no one present is overly familiar with massage-parlor procedure, and it remains unclear whether the first few grim-looking establishments we pass are houses of muscle care or, er, whores. Finally, we're able to locate a classier joint, and the pair exchange their duds for robes.

"You've got an exclusive," Kessler deadpans. "No one's ever taken a picture of us without our suits on. Hey, these are are going to be female masseurs, right?"

Indeed they are. "Oh . . . yeah," Kessler groans as his masseuse pummels his buttocks. "This is really going to sort me out for the flight."

Once again clothed, and having used the last of *Blender's* money to tip the ladies, Kessler and Fogarino rejoin us outside to debrief us on their day of debauch.

"What have I learned?" muses the guitarist. "Well, the fewer bandmates are around, the more money there is!"

"And I've learned," Fogarino concludes, "that decadence is fun." [BLENDER]

**"He's collapsed unconscious. I think we'll have to tear off the door."**

HOW THEY SPENT IT

INTERPOL	
New York	
January 24, 2002	
LUNCH AT 21 CLUB	397.00
TELEVISION WATCH DRUM TUNER	\$2.00
E-BOW	89.99
MASSAGE	150.00
ASSORTED TIPS	120.00
TOTAL	848.99



# ★ On a Roll

She was singing in bars at age 8. She lived for Supertramp. And she married the world's most successful hair-metal producer. So how on Earth did Shania Twain become a country superstar who lives in an Oprah-sized Swiss chateau and entertains billions at the Super Bowl? "I work harder than anyone I know," she explains.

BY ADRIAN DEVOY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PEGGY SIROMA

Shania Twain laughs off the suggestion that she can't roller-skate for shit.

HAT BY NIKE, DRESS BY BCBG, SOCKS AND SKATES FROM WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND, NYC

“I’ve never actually seen cocaine,”

Shania Twain muses as her luxury car swings up into Beverly Hills. “I know what it looks like, obviously, but I have yet to physically see it.”

For that reason alone, Twain is one of the most unusual musicians you’re ever likely to meet. “Although I did get high once,” she says — but before you can imagine the country diva (a term she loathes) sparking up a pipe in a burned-out crack den, she shoots down the illusion in its own flames. “It was at the dentist.”

Even if Twain were predisposed to enjoying the occasional snort — and clearly, she is not — you can be certain that she would never spare the minutes required to do so. She is a brisk woman who wastes neither time nor words. When asked to describe herself in one word, she opts for *impatient*. She tells you this while marching ahead of her entourage, the sooner to sign some autographs, get photographed, take a phone call, make some minor design decisions and get into the vehicle that will take her to her next album-hustling appointment. This entire maneuver takes a little over two minutes, but Shania Twain is on the campaign trail — and you’re either on the bus or you aren’t, buddy.

It has been six years since *Come On Over*, 1997’s 34 million-selling phenomenon, and Twain is back in the driver’s seat. Now the mother of a 1-year-old son, Eja D’Angelo, and a resident of La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland (where she and her husband, producer and collaborator Robert John “Mutt” Lange, own a classic

“I was always into the rock. AC/DC, man. The rock.”



French château), she has a new record — the exclamation point-festooned *Up!* — to promote, and an itinerary that would make many a road-hardened nü-metal band quietly wet its big black shorts.

Her aggressive ambition and absolute career-consciousness hasn’t always won her friends. Managers have walked out on account of her ruthless attitude. Her younger brother Darryl once described her as a “robot.” Steve Earle once called

her “the world’s highest-paid lap dancer.” (Which is rich, coming from a guy who looks like the world’s lowest-paid bartender.) But a friend of 11 years

sums up Twain best when he warns, “You won’t be the first or last to have been frustrated by her enigma.”



SHANIA TWAIN IS, by her own admission, Canadian. “We have a sense of neutrality and open-mindedness,” she says. “We’re friendly, but we’re not going to open up and tell our life story to the guy sitting beside us. It’s not our nature.”

Over a vegetarian lunch at the secluded Hotel Bel Air, Twain talks about music and begins to loosen up slightly. The first album she bought with her own money, she says, was Supertramp’s *Even in the Quietest Moments*. *Blender* tells her that’s funny, as her recent single “I’m Gonna Getcha Good!” was likened in these pages to the sound of Pink jamming with the bearded prog-rock combo — albeit “in a really good way.” “That’s cool,” she says. “I loved Supertramp.”

Though she would emerge as a country artist, the soundtrack of her youth was something she insists on calling “the rock.” “It was always the rock,” she enthuses. “The first concert I saw was Ted Nugent in Toronto, and I had a major thing about Bryan Adams and David Lee Roth. I didn’t even get into the art school-type thing — R.E.M. and all those bands — because I was so into the rock. AC/DC, man. The rock.”



Twain and hubby Robert John “Mutt” Lange: “Hey, that’s not six paces behind!”



In Switzerland, everyone plays the guitar like this.

BKINI TOP BY MISSONI FROM BARNEY’S VINTAGE JUMPSUIT AND BELT FROM WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND, NYC

Besides the rock, her true love was writing songs, which she still does almost every day. Some songs are small and fragile, too personal to play publicly (“even to my family”), while others are the brash and breezy anthems we have come to associate with the all-conquering Shania Twain brand.

These songs are so comfortable and conversational that even when Twain is ordering food, she sounds as if she’s road-testing new titles. “Bring it all at once,” she declares. “Put it right there. I’ll take it as it comes.” She says “That doesn’t impress me” more than once while discussing the trappings of success, and, at one point during lunch, she asks the waiter for a glass of water. That’s pretty unremarkable, until you realize that she recently wrote a song about



sexual jealousy entitled, yep, “Waiter! Bring Me Water!”

But you cannot talk about Twain’s songwriting without mentioning Mutt Lange. Her elusive other half is somewhere in the hotel today but will not be joining his wife in her promotional role, as he hasn’t spoken to the press in more than 20 years.

Lange possesses an exceptional track record as the extremely hands-on producer of some landmark albums, including AC/DC’s *Back in Black*, Foreigner’s *4*, Def Leppard’s *Hysteria* and Twain’s three most recent blockbusters. In many ways, he defined the sound of rock radio, but apart from his fondness for horrible shirts and his ’80s enormo-hair, we know very little about him. Such is his phobia of publicity, rumors claim he bought all

existing photos of himself. “Not true,” says his wife. “Even people who know us believe that, but it never happened.”

“Mutt has huge ears,” Bryan Adams said shortly after recording his 1996 album, *18 Til I Die*, with Lange. By this he meant that Lange has great aural capacity, not large lugs (although the few available photos suggest that he does, in fact, have a mighty set of flaps). “He listens to a guitar like it was an orchestra.”

“The real shock about Mutt is that he’s a very regular guy,” says Luke Lewis, who runs Mercury Nashville, the label for which Twain records, and who counts himself a good friend of Lange’s. “He loves history and politics and soccer. I remember around the time of [Twain’s 1995 CD] *The Woman in Me* asking him to do an interview, and he said, ‘No way.

I’ve come this far without doing any — why start now?’ ”

Some would argue that the 54-year-old Lange’s high-shine production squeezes all the life from the music he creates, but Twain leaps to his defense. She laughs out loud when the theory is put forth that the real secret of Twain and Lange (the Twangs, if you like) is that they take the most critically disparaged, uncool, mass-market music of the past 15 years — hair metal, disco, Europop, Garth Brooks-era country — and combine them in almost every song.

“I guess that makes sense,” Twain acknowledges with a smile. “What you hear is the collaboration between the two of us. As a producer, Mutt wants to make music that is succinct and sensible. He is an instrument, his whole physical being. →

It's hard to explain." But to return briefly to the rock: Whenever young Shania listened to AC/DC's "Let Me Put My Love Into You," did she ever think, "Mmm, I'll marry that big, hairy producer one day?"

"I must say it never really crossed my mind," she chuckles. "Isn't that strange?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SHANIA TWAIN'S 37 years have not only been strange but also suffused with great sadness. To understand her at all you must take into account her extraordinary past. "I lost my innocence too early," she says. "Too much happened."

It is often said that her life story would make a fine, weepy country song, something George Jones might get his tear ducts around. But even Nashville's hardest hack would have trouble with a few of its more heartrending twists.



"Sure, I'm over 21!": Twain sings for her supper at an Ontario bar.



"Ha! Ha! Ha!... You're all fired!": With her bandmates in Longshot, 1981

Picture a small, gap-toothed girl named Eileen Edwards from Timmins, Ontario. You would never have noticed her if she didn't have a singing voice as big and bold as the Rockies. Her real father had left, and her mother, Sharon, remarried an Ojibwa Indian named Jerry Twain, whom the talented youngster

adored. "We'd go snaring rabbits together," she remembers with a smile before sensibly adding, "Of course, I wasn't a vegetarian then."

But work was scarce, and the family often lived below the poverty line. In winter, Twain and her three siblings wrapped their feet in plastic bags to stop the cold and wet from getting through the rubber boots they shared. "People say there's a nobility in being poor," she says. "But when you don't have a winter coat . . . well, you don't want to go back there." Sometimes they had mustard sandwiches for lunch; sometimes they had nothing at all. Twain remembers her sister Carrie-Ann was once reduced to taking month-old buns to the school picnic. "As a child, you really felt the pressure," she adds solemnly. "But we all made it look as though we were OK."

Yet her mother was overbearingly ambitious and pinned all her hopes on her oldest daughter's God-given gift. At age 8, Eileen was singing standards in local bars most evenings; by 13 she was the family's main breadwinner, working the cash register at a drive-through McDonald's. Meanwhile, aside from her unquenchable passion for music, normal teenage life passed her by.

She made tapes that were rejected; she joined bands and left them. But the bar work remained a constant source of income, and Eileen was confident that one day she would make it. "All I wanted was to make a living out of music," she recalls. "And I knew that I could if I worked hard enough." Then in 1987, her mother and stepfather were in a head-on collision with a fully loaded logging truck. Both were killed instantly.

Twain's speech slows as she talks of this time and its effect on her. "It took away a lot of choices," she says deliberately. "I don't know if I would've been as driven if it hadn't happened. People say I'm ambitious, but I had to . . . survive." →








TIMMINS, ONTARIO



LA TOUR-DE-PEILZ, SWITZERLAND

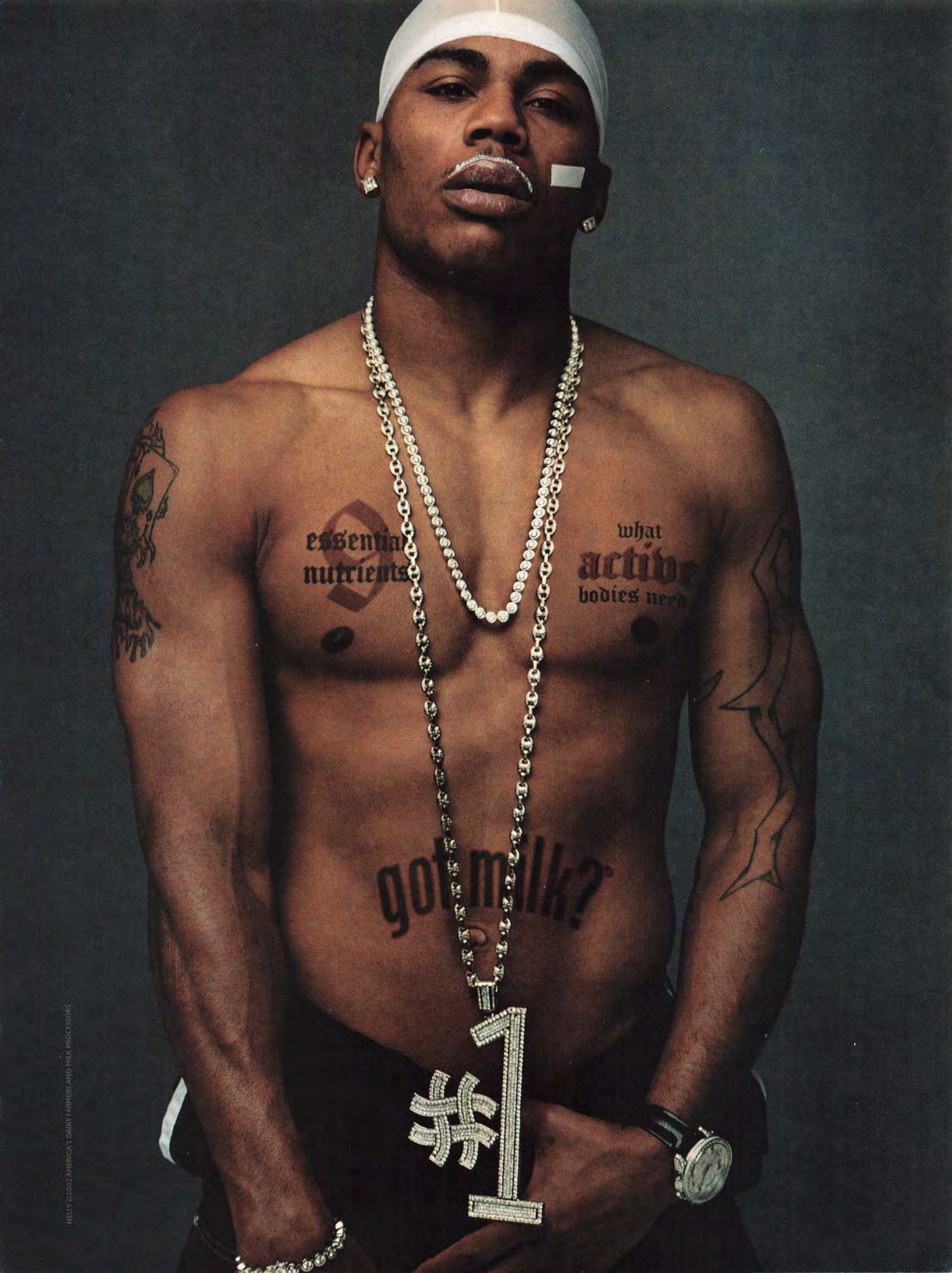
## Hey, Where Would You Rather Live?

One's her frosty hometown in the Canadian woods; the other's her adopted tax haven in the Swiss Alps. So which of the two storied towns in Shania Twain's life is the fairer?

<b>POPULATION</b>	
44,000	DRAW
67,000	
<b>LOCATION</b>	
 Mountainous, wooded terrain 500 miles north of Toronto	Nestled within the Alps along the shores of Lake Geneva, near Montreux and Vevey <b>EDGE: LA TOUR</b>
<b>SHANIA'S CRIB</b>	
Small cottage in the woods shared with three siblings, mother and stepfather	Le Château de Sully, a 500-acre chalet shared with the dude who produced freakin' <i>Pyromania</i> <b>EDGE: LA TOUR</b>
<b>FAMOUS NEIGHBORS</b>	
 Some guy who cut off his thumb in a lumberyard accident <b>EDGE: TIMMINS</b>	Michael Jackson, Phil Collins, Celine Dion 
<b>TOURIST ATTRACTIONS</b>	
Tembec Sawmill Tour (Highway 101), Shania Twain Centre (Algonquin Boulevard), Uncle Buck's Trout Farm (near the intersection of Highways 655 and 101)	 Charlie Chaplin's grave, Swiss Museum of Games, numerous vineyards, casinos, resorts <b>EDGE: LA TOUR</b>
<b>YEARLY FESTIVALS</b>	
South Porcupine Winter Carnival; Northern College's Annual Wheelchair Rally (both in February) <b>EDGE: TIMMINS</b>	Montreux Jazz Festival (held every July)
<b>SCENIC VISTAS</b>	
Drab landscape gutted by strip mining	The Alps, Lake Geneva, scads of hot, rich women <b>EDGE: LA TOUR</b>
<b>MOTTO</b>	
"The City With the Heart of Gold" <b>EDGE: TIMMINS</b>	"You're Gonna Need a Lot of Gold if You Want to Live in This City" 
<b>AND THE WINNER IS . . .</b>	
Despite the one-two tourism punch of northern Ontario's Tembec Sawmill Tour and Uncle Buck's Trout Farm, La Tour dodges Timmins's taxing challenge, 4-3. <b>STEVE KANDELL</b>	

Top: courtesy of Shania Twain (2); Sledbar: clockwise from top left: courtesy of the Shania Twain Centre; Alex Ursovic/The Toronto Sun; Tony Carhart/Spash News; Bettmann/Corbis; Ixvi/Getty Images; PhotoDisc/Getty Images; Christopher Ivey





essential  
nutrients

what  
active  
bodies need

got milk?

1

★ SHANIA TWAIN

Only 21, Eileen moved the family, of whom she was now the principal guardian, and took a job singing in a Vegas-style revue in Deerhurst, Ontario. It was soul-destroying work, but the money was good, and she had mouths to feed. Home for the Twains was now a cabin with no running water.

Then a Nashville lawyer came to hear her perform, and everything began to change. A demo, a couple of lucky breaks and some shameless networking secured Eileen a \$20,000 advance and a record deal. She changed her name to Shania, which means "I'm on my way" in Ojibwa, and relocated temporarily to Nashville.

After receiving several long-distance phone calls from a man introducing himself as Mutt, Twain agreed to meet her mysterious caller. The man with the canine nickname turned out to be Robert John Lange: songwriting giant, sonic architect and the most successful record producer of his generation.

They wrote together, fell in love, married and, in their spare time, began work on gleaming pop-country/arena rock records full of chatty lyrics, hook-riddled tunes and elephantine choruses. Recognizing that farmers have satellite dishes too, Twain made music videos that re-defined the rules of Nashville and introduced the world to the novel concept of the Sexy Country Chick. *The Woman in Me* sold 12 million copies, and *Come On Over* became the best-selling record ever by a female artist. Her hometown built a Shania shrine. She moved to Switzerland — nextdoor to Phil Collins on Lake Geneva — and lived, like a fairy princess, happily ever after.

"Something like that," Twain acknowledges. "I have worked harder than virtually anyone I know."

"You pray for an artist who will work as hard as Shania does," says Luke Lewis. "She works so hard it's fucking insane."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WELCOME TO THE wealthiest trailer park on the planet. Elton John is nextdoor. Mariah Carey is staying directly opposite, her front door just three steps away. Nickelback are across the road from Matchbox Twenty, and Justin Timberlake is at the end of the street. There he is now, sitting on his stoop. And hold on, isn't that Tim McGraw?

We are in Los Angeles, in the backstage Winnebago village at the thirtieth annual American Music Awards, where the performers' enclosure is bustling with all manner of curious celebrity life.

Before long, the stellar neighbors start to socialize. The Osbournes, who are



Shania is all too shy about demonstrating her shadow-puppetry skills.

TUBE TOP FROM WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND, NYC. BIKINI BY SLIPPY. PANTS BY YOHI YAMAHOTO

**"People say I'm ambitious, but I had to survive."**  
★

emceeding the show, pop into John's place for afternoon tea. The rock bands intermingle until you cannot tell one musician from another. Nelly strolls down the mini-main drag with full posse in tow. Faith Hill comes over to greet Twain but doesn't stay long.



The stair master: Performing at the American Music Awards earlier this year

In the midst of all this promiscuous activity, Twain retains an almost regal distance from her fellow entertainers, venturing out only once, to see Willie Nelson in his tour bus. She visits him discreetly and offers no details.

For their part, Twain's peers treat her with a cool respect. She is plainly not one of them, but hell, she must be doing something right. Nelly nods his approval; Kelly Osbourne offers a shy wave. A passing drummer watches her go by and mutters, "I'm gonna getcha wood."

Back inside her trailer, Twain is undergoing the first of this afternoon's four costume changes. Stylists fret and makeup flies as she's shoehorned into the latest creations from Paris, clothes that denote a more mature, high-end move away from her familiar leopard-print pantsuits of yore.

Momentarily oblivious to her new sartorial direction, Twain is worrying about her security guards. "There are too many of them," she announces. "They keep telling people to get out of the way when they aren't even in my way. It's just frigging embarrassing. There are, like, 50 percent too many security guys." Someone politely points out that she has only two guards. "Then it's one too many," she decides. →

**BED HEAD**



music is life

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Her obligations for the day done, Twain heads back to her hotel chalet, where she'll put her baby to bed and spend the evening with her husband "probably talking about soccer and hockey." In order not to waste a valuable Shania second, our car's journeys to and from engagements are used as gentle interview therapy.

Shania Twain is a complex creation: an impoverished Canadian country singer who lives like a Swiss banker, an AC/DC fan whose songs sound like ABBA, a sex symbol who shows little interest in sex, an artist whose lyrics touch millions but tell us little about herself.

In an attempt to better understand her, *Blender* gamely fires questions, and Twain politely responds — although you get the sense she would prefer to be undergoing intricate dentistry. Without the Novocaine this time.

*Would you agree that you are a difficult read, a closed book?*

"I can be," she says, shrugging offhandedly. "It depends on who I'm dealing with. I wouldn't want people to think that I was complicated or hung up, but I just don't walk around chatting my little head off. You could sit with me in a car for an hour and I wouldn't say a word, but . . . I can have fun."

*When was the last time you were truly reckless?*

"I don't think ever. I just don't have it in me to let go. I couldn't be so irresponsible. Because I started in music so young, I've seen many adults drunk and violent, and I cannot be that."

*Was it hurtful when your brother called you a "robot" in the tabloids?*

"Very. I think he may have been pressured into it. The press can be very good at picking on vulnerable people, and I think they caught him. The whole family was upset. But it slowly healed itself."

*You're not a particularly sexual person, are you?*

"I don't want to be sexual. I don't mind celebrating my womanhood, but . . . I developed so early. I wasn't ready. I strapped my chest down for years. I was singing in clubs from age 8, and there were a lot of drunk men, and . . . they don't know how old you are."

*There has been a lot made of the fact that you and Mutt adhere to Sant Mat, the Eastern religion.*



Jazz hands: Shania dressed for spring formal, age 17

"Well, there've been some silly things written, like Mutt and I don't believe in having sex. But that's not true, basically."

*Have you given a lot of money to an Indian man with a beard?*

"No. I seek spiritual truth. I believe in meditation, but that's it."

*Have you heard the joke that meditation is better than sitting around doing nothing?*

"There you go."

★★★★★

IN A BEIGE television studio in Burbank, a familiar chin appears from around the corner, followed sometime later by the rest of Jay Leno. The genial host wants to greet tonight's musical guest, but her dressing-room door is firmly closed. Shania Twain, he is informed, is in a business meeting. "But these are simple country folk," a puzzled Leno muses, knocking anyway. "Surely they don't have business meetings."

When they speak, Leno notes that he's intrigued by the ingenious format of *Up!* The new album comes in three versions: pop, country and Asian-influenced. Twain has prosaically dubbed them Red, Green and Blue, but *Blender* prefers the catchier Hollywood, Dollywood and Bollywood. "I'm in a kinda country mood today," Leno tells no one in particular.

Nicole Kidman, on hand to plug *The Hours*, courteously taps a foot as Twain and her band techno-boogie through *Up!*'s contagious title track, but deep down, the elegant Australian seems more of an indie girl. Both leave the studio before they get a chance to have the big Supertramp vs. Supergrass debate.

"She seemed very charming," Twain decides, sitting upright in the back seat. "And so tall!"

*Blender* tells Twain that Kidman was known as "Stalky" as a kid on account of her fishing-pole physique. For the first time in days, Twain softens. "Oh, really," she says thoughtfully. "That would explain a lot."

In the car as dusk falls, Twain sings along to a sad Etta James song playing on the radio. It is the most beautifully melancholic duet.

"I knew too much way too young," she says again as we finally arrive. "I'm sad that it happened, but I believe there was a reason for it all. And I guess" — she gestures to the luxury car, the secluded hotel and, lastly, herself — "this is the reason." [BLENDER]

## Pop Quiz! >>>

What does **Shania Twain** look for in a man? In a hard-rock frontman? In an olive? Her mysteries plumbed, and then some . . .

**AC/DC singer:**

**Brian Johnson or Bon Scott?**

Brian Johnson.

**Looks or humor?**

Humor.

**Saddle or bareback?**

Bareback.

**Looking or seeing?**

Seeing.

**Leopard-print or zebra skin?**

Leopard.

**Neil Young or Bob Dylan?**

Bob Dylan. Neil Young is great, though.

Argh!

**Left turn or right turn?**

Hmm, deep. Left.

**Black olives or green olives?**

Green.

**Luxury or comfort?**

Comfort, every time.

**Sinatra or Presley?**

Elvis.

**To play you in the movie:**

**Sandra Bullock or Julia Roberts?**

Julia Roberts.

**Electric or acoustic?**

Acoustic.

**Kissing or hugging?**

Hugging.

**Rags or riches?**

Riches. If you've ever been in rags, you know it's something you don't ever want again.

**Reason to live in Switzerland: the slim chance of war or the proximity to Phil Collins?**

Oh, my! It's gotta be Phil.

**Cash or charge?**

Cash.



AC/DC's Bon Scott: Not alive



Julia Roberts: Not Sandra Bullock



**120**  
**BEN HARPER**  
Pulls together the entirety of American music. Wow!  
★★★★



**128**  
**LINKIN PARK**  
Rap-rock's most imitated are back: They shout! They sob!  
★★★



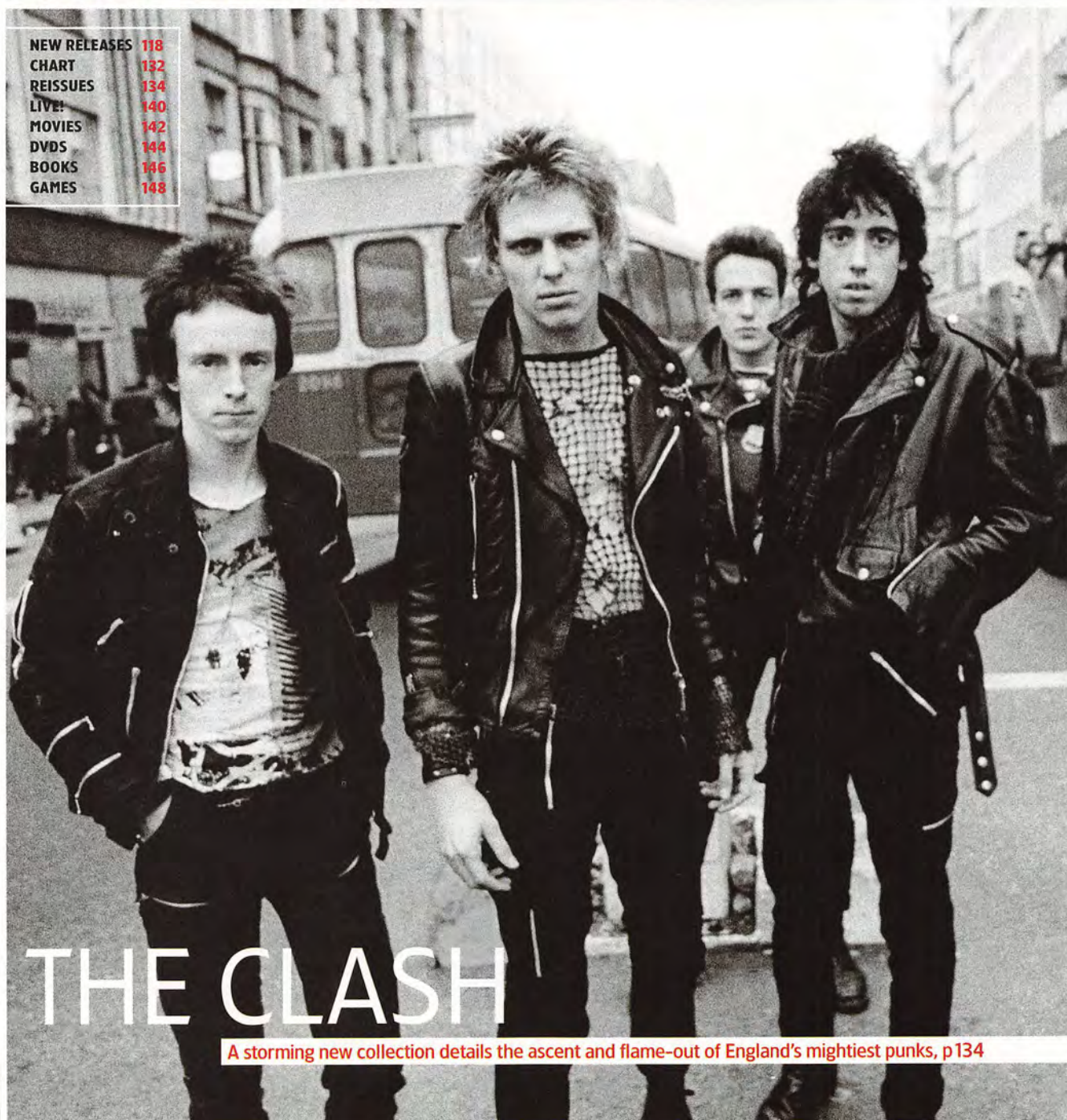
**140**  
**ZWAN**  
A hometown show for Billy Corgan's smiley new crew  
★★★★

# The Guide



THEY MAKE 'EM. WE REVIEW 'EM >>

NEW RELEASES	118
CHART	132
REISSUES	134
LIVE!	140
MOVIES	142
DVDS	144
BOOKS	146
GAMES	148



## THE CLASH

A storming new collection details the ascent and flame-out of England's mightiest punks, p134

Myriam Santos-Kayda/Reema USA (Harper), Paul Nason (Zwan), Urbammage.tv/Adrian Boot (The Clash)

# New Tough in Town

Endorsed by Eminem, riddled with bullets: rap's new superstar



"REALNESS," IN hip-hop terms, is the true wealth of any gangsta worth his tough talk. And right now, no rapper is richer than 50 Cent. How else do you characterize a man who admits he was still dealing crack when he received the advance from his first record deal? Whose first single, 1999's "How to Rob," was a heist fantasy that sparked a beef with nearly every rapper in the business? Who was stabbed in a March 2000 fracas with rival Ja Rule's crew, shot nine times (once in the jaw) in an unrelated incident two months later and was dropped by his label, Columbia, for fear of more violence?

Granted, mayhem is no guarantee of skills; there have been plenty of genuine thugs-turned-rappers who couldn't properly rhyme the couplets from Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham* if they read them off a Teleprompter.

A 27-year-old from Queens, New York, 50 is prodigiously skilled, although not in the lyrical-acrobat manner of Jay-Z or Eminem. Instead, his talent is seeming clever and likable in the midst of menace. Call it an Everythug appeal. Despite having been shot more times than Cindy Crawford, he still cracks nonchalant, loading his hit "Wanksta" with this deadpan outlaw boast: "Niggas say they gon' murder 50, how?/We ride around with guns the size of Lil' Bow Wow."

## 50 CENT GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'

★★★★

SHADY/AFTERMATH/  
INTERSCOPE

50's outrageousness and charismatic, lazy drawl caused a frenzy last year when he released multiple mix tapes with his G-Unit clique, supplying them directly to street vendors and generating the biggest buzz in hip-hop since the heyday of Biggie Smalls.

These tapes found a booster in Eminem, who signed 50 to his Shady Records label for a reported \$1 million. Has major-label sanctuary reformed 50? As he might say, Naaah, homie.

The feverishly anticipated *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* is a dark, despair-ridden collection of sociopathic vignettes. On "Heat," 50 celebrates the joy of firearms over a Dr. Dre-produced track that perversely substitutes gunshots for drum snares. The nasty, Southern bounce-style "Blood Hound" features the fractured refrain "I love to pump crack/Love to stay strapped/Love to squeeze gats," which he spits like a gleeful schoolkid during recess.

Even at their most nihilistic, these 16 songs (plus three bonus tracks) resonate melodically, like Eminem's most haunting material. Credit 50's gift for crafting indelible, sing-songy hooks, epitomized by "Wanksta" (included here), his bubbly cadence on the Dre-produced radio monster "In da Club" and "21 Questions," which sounds like his next big smash. It's

the closest thing to a love song he's ever recorded: 50 imagines scenes of misfortune — falling off, jail time, working at Burger King — and gently quizzes a girl about whether she'll stick by him.

Of course, most of 50's material is far less sensitive — at least toward others. The latest installment in his ongoing, albeit lopsided, feud with Ja Rule, "Back Down" mercilessly derides Rule for his thug posturing. The end of the song even features a monologue allegedly by the gay male stylist rumored to have had a tryst with Ja. (Rumors swirl that 50 paid the stylist \$50,000 for the guest vocals.)

Violence is never far from these lyrics. Abetted by a suitably dramatic Eminem-produced beat, "Patiently Waiting" addresses the threats that follow 50: "If I get shot today my phone'll stop ringin' again." Em's guest verse on the song even cryptically likens 50 to slain rap gods Biggie, Tupac Shakur and Harlem cult hero Big L — a comparison likely to make 50 hug his ever-present bulletproof vest even tighter.

"Many Men (Wish Death)," a frightening composition in the vein of Snoop Dogg's "Murder Was the Case," is the most powerful track. Starting with a dramatization of 50's shooting, the song unravels as an inner conflict as he turns alternately enraged, arrogant, contemplative, desolate and tormented, his mood swinging with each line. Then it concludes with an eerie, vengeful announcement about his attacker: "In the Bible it says what goes around comes around/Homie shot me, three weeks later he got shot down/Now it's clear that I'm here for a real reason/'Cause he got hit like I got hit, but he ain't fuckin' breathin'."

50 is as much a threat to his adversaries as to himself. And the warrior title of his wild debut might be wrong: He might get rich *and* die trying. **CHAIRMAN MAG**

## 50 Cent His greatest mix tapes →

### GUESS WHO'S BACK?

FULL CLIP, 2002

★★★★

Heading underground after Columbia Records drops him, 50 freestyles over beats jacked from other rappers. He turns gangsterisms into singsong hooks while waxing bullet-proof: "After a shell hit my dome, I ain't wait for doc to get it out/Hit my wisdom tooth, I — ecch, ptao — spit it out"

### NO MERCY, NO FEAR

NO LABEL, 2002

★★★

Menace and middle school mix on this collection, compiled by New York DJ Whoop Kid: 50 giggles about overweight ladies and cupcakes, meows like a cat and serenades his adored 9-mm handgun.



### GOD'S PLAN

NO LABEL, 2002

★★★★

With street hype skyrocketing and "Wanksta" helping to boost the *8 Mile* soundtrack to number 1, New York radio stations blared the spooky "Niggas," which exhumes a mysterious, unreleased Biggie verse. "Niggas" became 50's second radio hit, building expectations for *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* into full-on frenzy.

### BIG MIKE PRESENTS: THE FUTURE IS NOW!

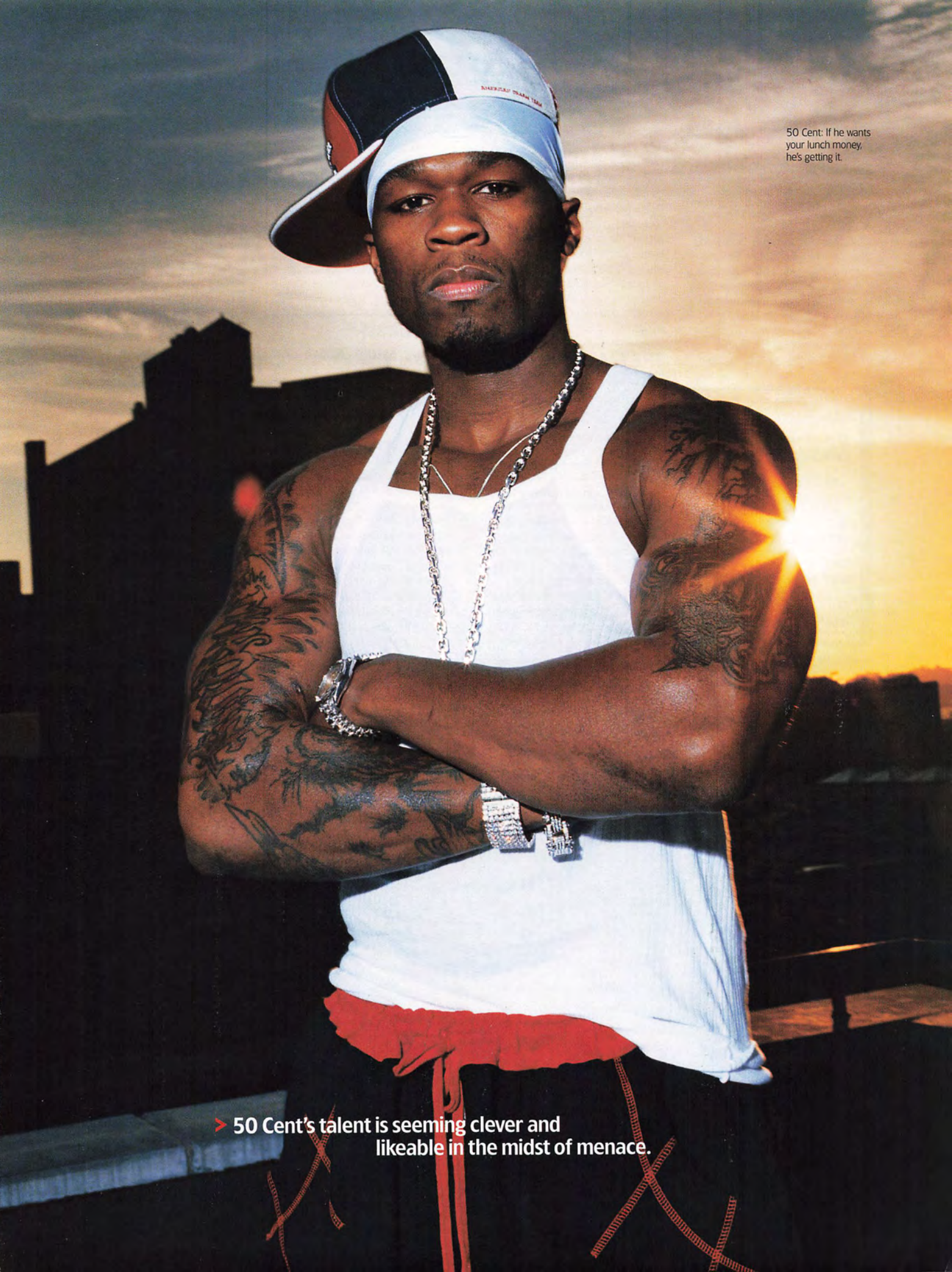
NO LABEL, 2002

★★★

50 takes revenge on Murder Inc. after rumberling with Irv Gotti at a recording studio. He imitates Ja Rule howling idiotically over Michelle Branch and Nickelback songs.



JONAH WEINER

A full-page photograph of 50 Cent. He is wearing a white tank top, a white and black baseball cap worn backward, and black pants with red drawstrings. He has extensive tattoos on both arms and is wearing multiple pieces of silver jewelry, including a chain, a watch, and bracelets. He is standing on a rooftop with a city skyline in the background under a sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect on his right arm.

50 Cent: If he wants  
your lunch money,  
he's getting it.

> 50 Cent's talent is seeming clever and likeable in the midst of menace.

**AFI**

**SING THE SORROW** ★★☆☆

DREAMWORKS

California angst addicts go major, discover hair gel

After six years of recording for the indie label Nitro, AFI jumped to major label DreamWorks, losing a few trademarks in the move. In exchange for a newly expanded recording budget (getting *Nevermind* knob twister Butch Vig to add Wagnerian production isn't cheap), they've dropped their oft-ridiculed Misfits influence — standard hardcore

tempo, "woah-oh-oh" choruses — as well as singer Davey Havok's giant cowlick and, sadly, a little immediacy. Their new image is definitely an evolution, though, and AFI's dexterous prog-punk shines on such thrilling rants as "Dancing Through Sunday." What's keeping the band from achieving a unique identity are Havok's generic whine and mediocre lyrics. He's obviously upset, but (save a gorgeous though pointlessly unlisted ballad) you hardly know why you should care.

ANTHONY MICCIO

**THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND**

**HITTIN' THE NOTE** ★★☆☆

PEACH/SANCTUARY

Fine return from the eternally jinxed, drug-blasted, blues-boogie bunch

Few bands elicit as many "Are they still going?" gasps as the Allmans, whose legacy of fatal vehicular crashes, legal problems and massive drug ingestion should have destroyed much, if not all, of their original early-'70s lineup. The core membership dwindled even more in 2000 with the ousting of Dickey Betts, their guitarist of three decades. So it comes as a considerable surprise that the band, if not as good as in its Duane Allman-led, boogie-tastic

heyday, still sounds at least recognizable on its first studio album in nine years. Some of the guitar playing, by Derek Trucks — the nephew of the band's drummer, Butch Trucks — and the prodigal Warren Haynes is often less Duane Allman than Def Leppard. But singer Gregg Allman has rarely come across as more elegantly grizzled, particularly on the meandering, nine minutes-plus "Desdemona."

CLARK COLLIS

**THE ATARIS**

**SO LONG, ASTORIA** ★★☆☆

COLUMBIA

A Southern California quartet turns wistful for the good ol' 1980s

Named for a first-generation video-game system, the Ataris are all about nostalgia. On their major-label debut, singer Kris Roe writes from the other side of adolescence — older, wiser, but still yearning for teenage innocence. Confessing that "Being grown up isn't half as much fun as growing up" ("In This Diary"), Roe flips through memories like photos in a scrapbook, recalling the last days of a lost summer ("Summer '79") and the tumult of his parents' divorce ("The Hero Dies in This One"). The band turns his melodic remembrances into energized, youthful pop



AFI: "Where's your hall pass, dorko?"

**THE SCORE** >>

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK

anthems, like a less-frivolous Blink-182. How sentimental are they? Astoria is the town in the 1985 movie *The Goonies*.

JOSEPH PATEL

**BEANS**

**TOMORROW RIGHT NOW**

★★★☆☆

WARP

Futurama rap from backpack MC-turned-clairvoyant

"I make music for MCs to slit their throats by," Beans brags on "Roar," the stomping standout on his solo debut. More accurately, this former member of

This page: Myriam Santos-Kayda/Reina USA (Harper). Opposite page: Jean-Paul Aussenard/WireImage.com (Osbourne)

**CURLY ROOTS**

Vintage SoCal songwriter perfects his soulful eclecticism

**BEN HARPER**

**DIAMONDS ON THE INSIDE**

★★★★★

ISLAND

>>> BEN HARPER IS the gold standard of the roots movement. Having developed his approach throughout the '90s over four studio albums and countless terrific live shows, the mixed-race Southern Californian drenches himself in vintage R&B and country, canon rock, gospel, reggae and, most signally, the blues.

Unlike other roots evangelists, Harper is an eclectic; his fascination with hip-hop, funk and symphonism — and even some soundboy electronica — temper his immersion in the classics. Even with a soulful voice that's equal parts Earth and Mars, it's a wonder Harper can ever focus lucidly on a single fusion.

*Diamonds On the Inside*, his first self-produced collection, masterfully combines his influences. *Diamonds* is pointed, pulled-back and juicily considered instead of massively jammed-out. Of course, Harper retains

the loose drifts that have made him the poet laureate of jam-band land. "Bring the Funk," with its humanist message ("Be black/Be white/Be brown") set to Ohio Players-like funk riffs, and "Temporary Remedy," with its rich blues accretions, stretch out and relax, like a stoned euphoria.

Yet his concentrated arrangements, such as the mystical-seeming "Touch From Your Lust," distinguish the album. "With My Own Two Hands" balances its reggae expertly between rootsy Marley-esque traditions and splashier Sly & Robbie momentums. The title song, a killer cowboy shirt of a tune, nods to '70s Nashville and looks at a girl through unironic far-away eyes. And with "Amen Omen," a masterpiece of gospel surge and pop-savvy sonic sculpture, Harper builds a stairway to heaven, which is always his musical goal. JAMES HUNTER

**BEN HARPER'S CURRENT LISTENING**

▶ **JACK JOHNSON** *BRUSHFIRE FAIRYTALES* ENJOY/UNIVERSAL

▶ **JOSEPH ARTHUR** *REDEMPTION'S SON* ENJOY/UNIVERSAL



After a bitter argument, Ben Harper's sideburns refused to get near his goatee.



the NYC avant-hip-hop crew Anti-Pop Consortium makes music for MCs to scratch their heads to: Despite its highfalutin title, *Tomorrow* paints a vintage picture of the future, where disco riffs and old-school boom boxes mingle with imagistic poetry and 1950s sci-fi. "Slow Broken" is built on a sinister, turbulent buzz that Beans matches with apocalyptic aplomb. He's at his absurdist best on the pulsing "Mutescreamer," calling his disarmingly catchy, off-kilter rhyme style "as affectionate as a pebble in your shoe." Intent on pioneering that "next shit," he's making today's also-rans into yesterday's news, one irregular rhythm and oblique metaphor at a time.

HUA HSU

## BUZZCOCKS

BUZZCOCKS ★★

MERGE

**Punk legends hit middle age, do the gray-haired pogo**

Inspired by the Sex Pistols but lacking political rage, Buzzcocks invented punk-

### ASTONISHING FACT! >>

On Christmas leave from military service in 1949, **GREGG ALLMAN's** father was killed by a Tennessee hitchhiker.



Deana Carter: Even if she couldn't sing, we'd still like her.

pop, applying gruff attitude to anguished two-minute songs about relationships. After regrouping in 1990, singer-guitarists Pete Shelley and Steve Diggle have stayed together, touring the oldies and reviving their distinctive chainsaw sound. Their latest release puts them in an awkward position, given the current epidemic of Hives and Strokes: What punk ever intended to grow old? They still spit nervous energy, but Shelley's melodies have suffered, and his pubescent whines have unfortunately matured into apologies for bad behavior. The old magic peeks through on the snarly "Lester Sands," but that's a

remake of a song they played in 1977. Could this refusal to move on mean that the boys who once sang "Orgasm Addict" are now hooked on Viagra?

JAMES HANNAHAM

## DEANA CARTER

I'M JUST A GIRL ★★

ARISTA NASHVILLE

**Comely country lass sings about Mustangs and see-through dresses**

On her moving late-'90s gems "Strawberry Wine" and "Count Me In," Nashville singer Deana Carter became the foremost articulator of a rare genre: homecoming queen-turned-pophead. Carter grew up with a guitarist father who played sessions with Bob Dylan, Paul Simon and others, and those influences show. As naturally as an English professor's daughter might quote Milton, she recolors Beatlesque pop on the crafty sing-along "Liar" and the R&B-ish ballad "Twice as Worth It." "Waiting," a duet with Dwight Yoakam, teems with sweetness and sex, and "Me and the Radio" is full of the Allman Brothers and hot desire. Add the sultry "You and Tequila," and Carter's third album qualifies as one of the country highs of the year.

JAMES HUNTER

## ROSANNE CASH

RULES OF TRAVEL ★★

CAPITOL

**Johnny Cash's daughter ditches fiddles, embraces book clubs**

Born into a country dynasty, Rosanne Cash semi-rebelled in the '80s by bringing New Wave to Nashville. She sang "I Don't Know Why You Don't Want Me," retro-futuristic country-pop produced by her then-husband, Rodney Crowell, as well as "Seven Year Ache," which was full of sublime melodic circles. But as the '90s dawned, Cash and Crowell divorced, and she reemerged as a woody New York →

I LOVE THIS CD!

**JACK OSBOURNE**  
THE DEVIL'S SON

**BECK**  
SEA CHANGE  
INTERSCOPE

"You can tell someone's maturity by his music, and I'm into stuff with melody lately. But don't worry, Ozzfest won't be turning into Lilith Fair!"

**LET'S JUMP IN THROUGH THE WINDOW.** Let's slide across the hood. Let's Bo and Luke-it. Let's Daisy Duke-it. Let's install the loudest Dixie horn in all of Hazzard County. But seriously folks, let's keep them wheels on the ground. **LET'S MOTOR.™**





It was easy to fool Everclear into thinking they were "outdoors."

## DARKER DAYS

L.A. post-grunge stars grow nostalgic for drugs and heavy metal

### EVERCLEAR

SLOW MOTION DAYDREAM  
★ ★

CAPITOL

▶▶ ART ALEXAKIS really understands jerks. The hits he has written as the leader of Everclear follow a Springsteen-esque tradition of rock as American dream journal, but unlike most blowhards who speak for "the people," he addresses the wicked hangers-on that often follow reveries.

Alexakis assembled Everclear at the optimal moment for cashing in on grunge, leading to accusations of fakery. But Alexakis has written some of the best songs about the generation that saw punk become alternative, the generation others label X. As the title track of *Slow Motion Daydream* suggests, he knows the troubles of people who never thought their good time would turn into a lifestyle.

For Everclear's sixth album, Alexakis turns his vinegary perspective on targets bigger than his usual boho chumps. John Ashcroft gets a smackdown in "Blackjack," while "How to Win Friends and Influence People" throws water in the face of a deluded citizenry. Then there's "Volvo Driving Soccer Mom," a song Alexakis takes too far and messes up: It starts out as a perky confessional from an ordinary

reformed bad girl who's covered her tattoos with silk suits, then turns into a weird fantasy about porn stars living in McMansions. Alexakis should have thrown out the blowup dolls (and the rape reference!) and given that deserving character a whole song.

Broad strokes have always been big with Everclear, especially musically — the band sure likes its major-chord anthems and "nyah-nyah" choruses. Small innovations surface here; strings lend complexity to "A Beautiful Life," and the creepy child-abduction tale "Chrysanthemum" sounds oddly like Metallica.

Mostly, though, this is vintage mid-'90s Everclear, with "Sunshine (That Acid Summer)" playing on slacker nostalgia for Cheap Trick and cheaper drugs, "TV Show" resurrecting the broken-home kid of "Father of Mine" and "New York Times" adding little to the September 11 memorial deluge. The formula works well enough to generate sympathy for Alexakis's latest round of losers. Alternative's apologist is still best at speaking for the little guys and yelling at the big ones. **ANN POWERS**

ART ALEXAKIS'S  
CURRENT LISTENING

MISSY ELLIOTT  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION GOLD MIND/ELEKTRA

JACK JOHNSON  
BRUSHFIRE FAIRYTALES ENJOY/UNIVERSAL

minimalist; on *Interiors*, with all the Crowell exiled from her sound, she slaved over her songwriting like someone who just discovered the poetry section at Barnes & Noble. *Rules of Travel* continues Cash's no-fun, high-literary period. Her singing remains, pleasingly, all flow and edge. "Closer Than I Appear" reassembles the '80s charm and groove; the noble title song is as intricately crafted as a Florentine tapestry. But Cash desperately needs some Crowell-style fireworks and lowdown vaudeville cunning in her over-refined music.

JAMES HUNTER

### CAVE IN

ANTENNA ★ ★ ★

RCA

Cave In tell emo kids: It's time to leave the bedroom

When Cave In singer Stephen Brodsky wails "Who inspires you?" early in the Boston quartet's major-label debut, it's less a question than a challenge to downcast emo kids to get a life and engage with the world. The band certainly has: Cave In find their muse everywhere, in the anthemic posturing of old-school U2, the sinister riffing of Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi and points in between. Brodsky is at once cocksure and vulnerable, both Bono and Rivers Cuomo, as his cohorts veer from heavy prog-metal ("Joy Opposites") to thick-hooked power pop ("Anchor"). Always, though, the songs transform emo's search for truth and its vivid angst (relationships suck, life sucks, I suck) into great drama.

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

### CURSIVE

THE UGLY ORGAN ★ ★ ★ ★

SADDLE CREEK

Fourth full-length and third successive concept album by Omaha's self-referential emo champs

Emo punk is an acquired taste for anybody outside the angsty 16-to-21 demographic. Often rife with self-indulgent references to emotional upset and romantic dysfunction, it excludes anyone past the age of acne. On *The Ugly Organ*, Cursive might just expand emo's demographic to include the angsty 22-to-32 grad-student demographic. Singer Tim Kasher, who suffered a collapsed lung before a tour last year, rouses his powerful, nervy voice to recite lyrics that are effectively postmodern, three-minute bursts of literature — accompanied by intricate guitars, carnival organ lines and dramatic cello swoops. "The crowds are catching on to the self-inflicted song." Kasher sings on "Art Is Hard": "Well, here we go again, the art of acting weak, far enough to fail, to boost your CD sales."

With this groundbreaking stab at emo self-analysis, Cursive deserve at least a boost out of the emo ghetto.

ALEC HANLEY BEHIS

### ANI DI FRANCO

EVOLVE ★ ★ ★ ★

RIGHTEOUS BABE

Ex-folkie DIY icon fronts a band so right, you'll wish she hadn't dumped it

Those who still think of Ani DiFranco as a protest folkie armed with an acoustic guitar and some gripes are way behind the curve — *Evolve* announces a new mutation, a shift back toward solo live performance, but it's also an exciting demonstration of her last one, in which DiFranco became a true bandleader. The songs are richly and surprisingly textured, having more in common with experimental jazz than folk. DiFranco has refined her most over-the-top vocal mannerisms; others make more sense now, matched with a tangy guitar or thick, snapping bass line. She's still a lefty crusader, but she makes her ideals most compelling when, in the final twisting lines of "Serpentine," she connects the personal and political. Sadly, that song and the title track point toward a recent return to solo performance — this may be the last chance for a while to hear how fascinating she is with a band she knows intimately.

JOHN DEFORE

### THE DIPLOMATS

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY ★ ★ ★

ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM

Cam'ron & Co. debut with a mixed bag of crack jokes and R&B samples

The first rule of solo hip-hop success? Bring your crew up behind you. So when Harlem tough Cam'ron overcame a terminally choppy rhyming style on last year's poppy, platinum *Come Home With Me*, it was just a quick second until his buddies started popping up. Enter the Diplomats — Cam'ron, Juelz Santana, Jimmy Jones and Hell Rell — who say they've sold more than 400,000 self-released mix tapes on the street. "We Built This City" slyly turns Starship's cheesy '80s rock anthem into a crack-dealing pun ("We

I LOVE THIS CD!



**NATASHIA WILLIAMS**  
ONE OF TV'S SHE SPIES



**RES HOW I DO**  
MCA

"I liked that I couldn't pigeonhole her voice. It's so unique that I couldn't even imagine what she looked like."

built this city on rock," Cam chuckles), while "Bout It (Part III)" is hazy, Dr. Dre-style G-funk set uptown. But the rhymes grow indistinct over the two-disc haul, and sped-up R&B samples, used on almost every other track, wear thin.

JONAH WEINER

## IBRAHIM FERRER

**BUENOS HERMANOS** ★★☆☆

WORLD CIRCUIT/NONESUCH

**Kangol-sporting septuagenarian turns up the heat on second solo album**

Literally plucked off a street in Havana to join the Buena Vista Social Club's multiplatinum-selling revival of pre-revolutionary Cuban music, singer Ibrahim Ferrer brought an intimate and hard-earned knowledge of the melodramatic bolero ballad form to the music. Six years later, his name's on the sleeve of the Buena Vista franchise's most rhythmically progressive sequel to date. Producer-guitarist Ry Cooder

### ASTONISHING FACT! >>

**THE DIPLOMATS'** Cam'ron owns four liquor stores and two laundromats in Harlem. Now he can pass out in a puddle of Boone's and get his shirt cleaned the same day.

curated this unexpectedly lively sequel, and Ferrer, at 76, navigates the tricky rumba turns of "Guaguanco Callejero" and the carnival-esque "No Tiene Telarana" with a jazzman's aplomb. And when drummers Jim Keltner and Joachim Cooder aren't driving bassist Cachaito Lopez into the red zone, Ferrer continues to lay down the sultriest boleros that your swinging bachelor pad can possibly handle.

RICHARD GEHR

## (HED) PLANET EARTH

**BLACKOUT** ★★☆☆

JIVE

**Though these rap-rockers are a bit dim about rap, they do bring the rock noise**

Even in the special-ed classroom of rap-rock, (hed) Planet Earth stand out as cerebrally challenged: "Tits/clits/bong hits" is their idea of a swell rhyme. Many of their song titles are of the one-word variety ("Bitches," "Fallen," "Stevie"), as if a second word (or third syllable) would exhaust their brains. And by the sound of things, *Straight Outta Compton* is the last hip-hop record they've heard. But this SoCal sextet has one thing going for it: an uncanny knack for making ugly noise. Though



In the People's Republic of Cool, Ibrahim Ferrer is always El Presidente.

*Blackout*, (hed) Planet Earth's third album, isn't as precisely calibrated an assault as 2000's *Broke*, it's still a bracing blast of twenty-first-century hard rock. Like every metal singer in creation, vocalist Jahred spends most of his time perfecting his imitation of Linda Blair's touched-by-the-devil croak. But unlike most metal bands, (hed) Planet Earth place a handful of detailed arrangements and some rhythmic kick

behind him. Which, come to think of it, is a pretty smart idea.

JEFF SALAMON

## HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH

**HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH**

★★☆☆

ATLANTIC

**Eight years ago, they were America's biggest rock band. Now they've got Woody Harrelson on backup vocals**

Looking to the Hooties for depth is like turning to Christina Aguilera for tips on dressing classy. After all, what put this South Carolina bar band on the map wasn't insight but incessant touring and the comforting, obvious corn of its 1994 megahit, *Cracked Rear View*, the second-best-selling debut ever. Even so, their fifth album finds social commentary mixed with the usual bittersweet love songs. On "Little Brother," singer Darius Rucker sees young homies in the 'hood "trying hard to maintain," and urges them to work hard for success. (Word!) Elsewhere, the band finds breaking up hard to do, misses old lovers only when it rains and yearns for the "Deeper Side." Don't we all, Hootie.

J.D. CONSIDINE →

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The Libertines:  
Too busy writing  
songs to comb  
your hair, kids?



## LONDON CALLING

The "English Strokes" make the first hot rock debut of 2003

### THE LIBERTINES

UP THE BRACKET ★★★★★

ROUGH TRADE

▶▶ THE LIBERTINES HAVE described themselves in interviews as heroin users, ex-male prostitutes and hedonists of the most determined kind. This young London quartet probably wouldn't want to be called the English Strokes, but that's a fair description, too. The Libertines revere rock's past, as do the Strokes; are, for the most part, just as handsome; and are even signed to the same tiny British record label.

While the Strokes reflect the disheveled, supercool ethos of lower Manhattan, the Libertines evoke the hectic, down-at-the-heels glamour of late-night London, when the pubs shut and boozed-up humanity spills onto the streets.

So while the Strokes are uptight and exasperated, the Libertines are boozy and exuberant. Their guitar/bass/drums/two singers attack appears chaotic, but with deft time changes, melodic swoops and offstage shouts, it's deceptively light on its feet. The title track, "Vertigo" and "I Get Along" exhibit an irres-

istible *joie de vivre*, and you can almost smell alcohol on the breath of the Music Hall romp "The Boy Looked at Johnny" and the ferocious first single, "What a Waster." Before things get too chirpy, the witty "Begging" adds a welcome layer of foggy melancholy, conjuring gray British Sunday afternoons.

Not since the Clash has a band evoked so precisely the grime and thrill of young London. Add co-singer and guitarist Pete Doherty's guttural snarl — close your eyes and it sounds like Joe Strummer is in the room with you — and it's probably no coincidence that former Clash guitarist Mick Jones was coaxed out of retirement to produce *Up the Bracket*.

Jones insisted that the CD cover feature a shot of riot police, echoing the photograph on the Clash's 1977 debut. As first albums go, *Up the Bracket* stops short of that explosive opening salvo. But it comes pretty close. **ANDY PEMBERTON**

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### HOT ACTION COP

FEVER FOR THE FLAVA ★★

LAVA/ATLANTIC

Horndog Nashville foursome fights for its right to throw a funky metal hip-hop party

It can't be easy fantasizing about Britney Spears and thinking up new ways to rhyme *hoochie* with *coochie*, but Hot Action Cop frontman Rob Werthner is up to the task. Smutty, snotty and loud, *Fever for the Flava* makes Kid Rock seem three-dimensional and Limp Bizkit erudite. Behind the lusty bluster, HAC have a reasonably broad musicality, owing less to nü-metal than to its source material: Guns N' Roses, Prince, socks-on-their-cocks-era Red Hot Chili Peppers. With tour sponsorship from the *Girls Gone Wild* video series and the hookiness of the juvenile (and Juvenile-influenced) title track, Hot Action Cop should shoot to the top of airplay charts, at least among strip-club DJs.

JASON COHEN

### IDLEWILD

THE REMOTE PART ★★★★★

CAPITOL

Scottish rockers unleash their inner poets and mature into fierce contenders for the Britpop throne

Post-punk noise and mangled guitars may be the preferred means of expression for these five lads from the Edinburgh highlands, but even as they thrashed at their drum kits and shouted their choruses on previous albums, they've found it hard to keep their sensitive intellects hidden. Their debut, 1999's *Hope Is Important*, wore its heart on its album sleeve, and the sophisticated lyrics of *1000 Broken Windows* belied the violence of its title. Now, Idlewild can no longer pretend to be goonish rockers; their romantic natures have taken over, to great effect. "You Held the World in Your Arms," the anthemic opening of their third album, soars on an orchestral string arrangement, and soft ballads full of acoustic guitar and piano passages pop up all over. The result is like a cross between R.E.M. and Coldplay, but Idlewild show their true smarts by continuing to attack every track with youthful energy and passion.

JOHN DONOHUE

### KINGS OF LEON

KINGS OF LEON ★★★★★

RCA

Sons — and a nephew — of a preacher man represent the return of rock's dirty South

Like a Southern-fried version of the Strokes, Tennessee's Kings of Leon —

three shaggy-haired sons of a Pentecostal evangelist, who look shockingly like the Hanson brothers from *Slapshot*, plus one of their cousins — channel girl problems into precise but jumpy rhythms, humming riffs and soulful melodies. Singer-guitarist Caleb Followill and his brothers grew up playing free-spirited gospel in church but admit that the White Stripes inspired their twangy garage sound. Don't mistake them for return-of-rock poseurs, though: This five-song debut counterbalances Velvet Underground cool with Creedence Clearwater Revival warmth and offers tunes to match its sound. Followill could work on his delivery, which sometimes slips from laid-back to lazy, but his bandmates play with a fervor that could have been developed only under a revival tent.

NICK CATUCCI

### LIGHTNING BOLT

WONDERFUL RAINBOW ★★★★★

LOAD

Rhode Island art-metal duo attack their instruments — and you — on third album

If the White Stripes gave up blues-rock for steroids, acid and death metal, they might sound something like this. Powered by a 3,800-watt bass amp and a drummer who spills across his kit like a waiter trying to catch dishes, Lightning Bolt arrange raw noise into barreling hooks. No wonder they recently opened for Sonic Youth at a New York show. Their instrumental thrashes are built around grinds as much as grooves. On "Crown of Storms" Brian Gibson's bass, distorted to resemble a guitar, ferrets around finger-picked high notes, imitating Maiden-esque wanking, then lapses into a thundering one-note stomp; Brian Chippendale's drums stab and syncopate a growling riff on "Dracula Mountain." When the title track's shimmering, minimalist melody starts sounding too pretty, wiry vocals hum along in off-key falsetto, deflating the moment — Lightning Bolt have no use for prettiness without irony.

JONAH WEINER

I LOVE THIS CD!



RACHEL TRUE  
STAR OF TV'S  
HALF AND HALF



THIEVERY CORPORATION  
SOUNDS FROM THE  
VERVE HI-FI  
VERVE

"It's ethnic, but it's also a little spiritual. And it's a little dirty, but it's also a little funky. I like all their other stuff, too."

## LONGWAVE

### THE STRANGEST THINGS ☆☆

RCA

**New York alt-rock scenesters have opened for the Strokes. How cool!**

The opening blast of guitar in "Wake Me When It's Over," the first song on Longwave's second album, seems to arrive a hair faster than you expect — each time, the piercing sound gives you an involuntary spasm. From there, *The Strangest Things* never gets any more fun. A quartet from New York's Lower East Side, Longwave sound more British than Strokes-ish, with a mild talent for writing melodies that demand your attention. Steve Schlitz's tunes don't feel like they come from anywhere — an idea, an emotion — other than an urge to please listeners. Which may explain why Longwave don't have a sound so much as a passel of bands they sound like: Radiohead, Coldplay, the usual enlightened suspects.

DEVIN GORDON

#### ASTONISHING FACT! >>

As a kid, **IDLEWILD's** Allan Stewart was a Scottish national badminton champ. Stop playing with your shuttlecock!



Longwave: Where do they keep the batteries? Oh. Gross.

## STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS

### PIG LIB ☆☆☆

MATADOR

**Indie-rock idol makes great, mushy album, refuses to explain what a Jick is**

It's been 15 years since Stephen Malkmus helped form indie-rock greats Pavement, and only now has the guy

finally found his band — a band that can hold a tune together and keep a steady beat for minutes at a time; a band that practices. Hello, Jicks! Sure, they've debuted already, back when this singer-guitarist reemerged as a solo act, on 2001's *Stephen Malkmus*. But they all seemed to be getting to know one another then; now they sound like the oldest of pals, and they've made a great record of choogling and — surprisingly — for the wonky Malkmus — tender tunes

It helps that Malkmus is playing better guitar than ever: "Witch Mountain Bridge" and "1% of One" have him pounding his effects pedals. More crucially, his band exudes warmth and he sounds grounded, as though he's found a little peace in the book-lined treehouse of his mind.

RJ SMITH

## MR. CHEEKS

### BACK AGAIN ☆☆

UPTOWN/UNIVERSAL

**On his second solo outing, former Lost Boyz loses his way**

With the double-bump excitement of last year's surprise hit and stripper anthem "Lights, Camera, Action!", former Lost Boyz principal Mr. Cheeks reminded hip-hop fans how much fun they'd had succumbing to mid-'90s chant-alongs like "Lifestyles of the Rich and Shameless" and "Jeeps, Lex Coups, Bimaz & Benz." Unfortunately, take two of the Queens, New York, rapper's solo career doesn't have much to match that. Full of standard-issue street rhymes and treacly R&B hooks, *Back Again* makes you want to shout "Cut!" halfway through. The soft, tinkling keys and plodding beat throughout "The Hustle" even manage to dampen a →

**(hed)**  
PLANET EARTH



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## THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES

Lucinda Williams:  
A little too cool to  
even hitchhike  
successfully



# LONELY ROAD

Insightful Southern songwriter groans, moans, raps!

**LUCINDA  
WILLIAMS**

the album live, they have such a bone-deep understanding of each cut that even the messiness feels

WORLD WITHOUT

guilt appearance from the nearly-  
always-explosive M.O.P. Sorely lacking  
rhythm-shaking capabilities, Mr. Cheeks's  
lead is *butt*.

DUST BRY

## 5. DYNAMITE

**A LITTLE DEEPER** ★★★★★

II SCOPE

**Winner of the U.K.'s prestigious Mercury Prize comes from London, and she's, er, blowing up!**

Imi McLean-Daley originally came from English clubland's garage scene, where fast-chatting MCs adorn accelerated breakbeats at the juncture of rap, garage and R&B. But she's already recording garage like the spent booster stages of some gargantuan space rocket. *A Little Deeper* encompasses high beats, testifying soul, the spiritual and the profane, the standout "It Takes More" even incorporates a tragic accordion, almost creating klezmer hip-hop. Alternately singing, rhyming and raging, McLean-Daley dominates throughout with a righteous, incantatory delivery. For her to pull off something as ambitious, gritty and accomplished as this at age 21 is flat-out amazing. The heir to Soul II Soul's position as a classic British soul export, she could have Lauryn Hill's crown in her sights too.

ANDREW HARRISON

## MUGGS

**DUST** ★★

ANTI-EPITAPH

**Cypress Hill producer ditches hip-hop for trip-hop**

DJ Muggs's second solo album is an ephemeral, genre-less mix of beat-driven mood music. It's well-traveled territory, with Portishead and Massive Attack as archetypes of the style, and Muggs comes to the party a few years too late. Still, he stretches melancholy and atmosphere out of sounds he never used in Cypress Hill. Clanging guitars, rippling pianos and acoustic folk tones are synthesized and spun into down-tempo blues sung by guests Greg Dulli (Afghan Whigs), Josh Todd (ex-Buckcherry) and newcomer Amy Trujillo. Sometimes it's too earnest —

e.g., having children singing on "Rain." But there's a sense of joy when a producer jettisons his signature sound for new directions — a transformation heard clearly on *Dust*.

JOSEPH PATEL

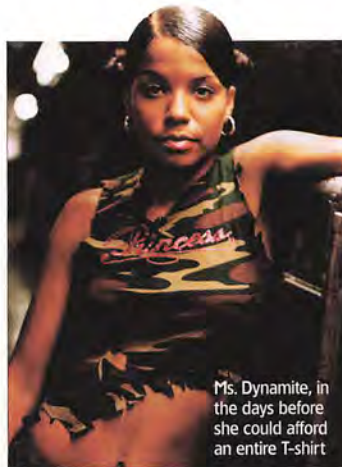
## PACIFIER

**PACIFIER** ★★

ARISTA

**Wow — modern rock from New Zealand sounds just like modern rock from the good ol' U.S.A.!**

When Pacifier chant "You all sound the same!" on "Nothing," midway through their eponymous American debut, they should consider changing that *you* to *we*. Despite their exotic Kiwi origin, Pacifier don't veer from alternative rock's official minor-league rulebook, mixing dissonant angst anthems à la Chevelle and Taproot ("Semi-Normal") and Staind-style power ballads ("Walls") with echoes of Linkin Park. With production courtesy of Josh Abraham (Staind, Limp Bizkit) and cameos from DJ Lethal of Limp Bizkit and Scott Weiland, Pacifier get buffed to a predictable, Ozzfest-ready sheen. The only surprising twist is Jon Toogood's neo-New Wave vocals, which evoke everyone from Joe Jackson to Tears for Fears. So while Pacifier don't suck, it's



Ms. Dynamite, in the days before she could afford an entire T-shirt

hard to distinguish them from the other unknown soldiers on the front lines in nu-metal's battle of the bland.

MATT DIEHL

## TAMMY FAYE STARLITE AND THE ANGELS OF MERCY

**USED COUNTRY FEMALE** ★★

DIESEL ONLY

**Imagine Loretta Lynn with Tourette's syndrome and a vibrator**

On what is probably the only religion-themed album this year to feature four

faked (?) orgasms, Tammy Faye Starlite lavishes her porn-kitten persona and surprisingly solid vocals on a set of songs about sex, Jesus and sex with Jesus, a blast of blasphemy sure to land her and her excellent backup band a warmup slot in the ninth circle of you-know-where. Ranging from the clever ("Taken") to the tedious ("Ride the Cotton Pony") to the truly inspired ("Jerusalem Moan," "The Jim Rob Song"), this native New Yorker's performance-art rendering of a pill-up, confused country star will put a hymn on your lips and pitch a revival tent in your britches — but you may pay for it in the afterlife.

JOHN RATLIFF

## TALL DWARFS

**THE SKY ABOVE THE MUD BELOW** ★★

CARROT TOP

**After 24 years, pioneering Kiwi indie duo brings hi-tech methods to its kaleidoscopic lo-fi world**

Long before Beck owned his first four-track tape deck or Pavement muddled up a mix, Chris Knox and Alec Bathgate were primitive pop fantasists in love with sonic clutter. For their first record since 1998, Tall Dwarfs add — *gasp* — computerized Pro Tools to their home →

**I LOVE THIS CO!**

**TOMMY DAVIDSON**  
IN LIVING COLOR  
ALLIUMNUS

**SLUM VILLAGE**  
FANTASTIC, VOL. 2  
CAPITOL

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Linkin Park: Their charisma leaps off the page.



## SAD BOYS

Carhartt spokesmodels kick ass — in a touchy-feely way!

### LINKIN PARK

METEORA ★★★

WARNER BROS.

➔ BACK IN THE days before America became Oprah-ized, the rock gods we chose didn't give a damn about their insides — Led Zeppelin and Aerosmith sang about their johnsons, not their hearts. But since Kurt Cobain took a whiff of teen spirit in 1991, rock's mighty men have grown concerned about their souls and their feelings.

In this, Linkin Park are no different from Papa Roach: Singer Chester Bennington croons about loneliness, while Mike Shinoda raps about "blood, sweat and tears." Even as the band fuses rap and metal, music's most masculine genres, they touch their feminine sides. On their debut, *Hybrid Theory* — the best-selling CD of 2001, at 8 million copies — the L.A. sextet telegraphed its vulnerability by mixing girlish, sentimental things like melody, and even a touch of the Backstreet Boys, into their patented Spine-Shattering Guitar Fury.

*Meteora* is harder, denser, uglier. "Lying From You" is all swarming, droning riff-ola, and the guitars in "Hit the Floor" grind as relentlessly as

anything by Pantera. On the former, which begins with squealing tires, Linkin Park make hip-hop sound like an Amtrak collision. They barely make a pretty sound until the sixth track, "Easier to Run," which is gussied up with a cotton-gauze wash of synths and Bennington's soaring vocals. No matter how much Bennington screams, Linkin Park's main ingredient isn't hate so much as hurt — and the pedestrian wounds of rejection and insecurity.

The tension between violence and vulnerability almost tears *Meteora* apart. On the swaying, stomping "From the Inside," Bennington sings, "I don't know who to trust" — and his insecurity becomes another element in the album's schizophrenic sprawl.

Linkin Park construct their music from the tangled emotions and Top 40 trash swirling inside a bad brain: shards of teen-pop and rap, an urge to smash teachers' faces, even a tiny, underfed and poorly lit scrap of love.

PAT BLASHILL

MIKE SHINODA'S CURRENT LISTENING

THE POLICE SYNCHRONICITY *ALM*

THE FAINT DANSE MACABRE *SADDLE CREEK*

recording arsenal. The result, while hardly lush, is more beautifully crafted than discordant, whether it's the punchy strum of "Meet the Beatle," the jubilant harmonies of "Ok Forever" or the understated instrumental "Cascade," which snakes organ and guitar around a Casiotone drumbeat. The experimental weirdness shoots up at the end, with eight bonus tracks by "International Tall Dwarfs," featuring some fellow members of the indie-pop brotherhood: the Clean, Elf Power, Half Japanese and Neutral Milk Hotel.

JASON COHEN

## THE BEN TAYLOR BAND

FAMOUS AMONG THE BARNS

★★★

IRIS

Debut album from the son of James Taylor and Carly Simon

"I understand that mushrooms come from outer space/They always leave a smile upon my face," sings Ben Taylor, rather tellingly, on "Mushroom Dance." The debut from this 25-year-old former model, whose parents feature heavily in the history of American folk-pop, is a gentle, sweet and unassuming acoustic record, its musical landscape unashamedly pastoral and full of hippie values — another song is entitled "I Am the Sun." Taylor sounds disarmingly like his father but sometimes pale enough to require a blood transfusion. He claims to be influenced by hip-hop — but not here, he isn't. *Famous Among the Barns* is date-marked 1972; it has flowers in its hair; it believes in peace. Dr. Dre will not be called in for remix duties.

NICK DUERDEN

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

THE AMERICAN SONG-POEM ANTHOLOGY ★★★

BAR/NONE

A marketing scam that led to some really strange music

How to explain this oddity? Certain back-of-the-magazine ads used to solicit lyrics — sorry, "song-poems" — from amateur wordsmiths willing to pay for the privilege of having their words recorded, hastily, by actual musicians. (Representative titles: "Convertible and Headbands," "Listen Mister Hat," "I Like Yellow Things.") The results were then sold back to the suckers, er, songwriters on records that are now prized by collectors, and from which this collection was drawn. Fans of the so-bad-it's-good aesthetic will find plenty to bounce the mind here, but be warned: Once you've heard Gene Marshall warbling "Jimmy Carter Says 'Yes,'" you'll never hear pop music the same way again.

JOHN RATLIFF →



Private. James Mayberry. 11B Infantryman.

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# THE MOPESTRESS

It's Heartbreak Motel for the King's thrice-divorced princess

## LISA MARIE PRESLEY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

★★

CAPITOL

▶▶ IF THE CHIP on Lisa Marie Presley's shoulder were any bigger, she'd be a lumberjack. Move over, Courtney Love: Here's a woman determined to dump her psychodrama into the mainstream.

As every tabloid devotee knows, Elvis's daughter is the ex-missus of both Nicolas Cage and Michael Jackson. But Presley, who's 35, still gets along with her first husband, Danny Keough, an undistinguished songwriter who collaborated with her on this album filled with angry, guilt-ridden kiss-offs.

Presley's debut has been marinating for years, through various versions and producers. But the music is consistent: broad, slow-strumming rock, plush and glum in minor keys.

Professional as the backup is, melodies are scarce, and Presley's low,

breathy voice belongs in karaoke. She randomly bursts into dramatics, and when she reaches higher and fuller, she sounds uncannily like Cher, who has always known that a drama queen still needs a catchy chorus.

The songs, unfortunately, aren't Hollywood tell-alls, though "Lights Out" contemplates the family funeral plot in "the damn back lawn" in Memphis. Most of the songs are the free-associating spew of a potty-mouthed, proudly maladjusted gal who loves her children and despises or mistrusts everyone else, including herself.

Self-righteousness, paranoia and perverse pride circle endlessly. The album could have been worse; Presley could have remade her dad's "Don't Be Cruel." In a self-obsessed way, that is her message. *JON PARELES*

**LISA MARIE PRESLEY'S CURRENT LISTENING**

- ▶ JEFF BUCKLEY *GRACE* COLUMBIA
- ▶ MARILYN MANSON *MECHANICAL ANIMALS* NOTHING/INTEGRISCOPE

▶ Presley's low, breathy voice belongs in karaoke.



Lisa Marie Presley, missing the warm caresses of her ex, Michael Jackson?



# THE POLICE

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## COSMO VITELLI

CLEAN ★★

ASTRALWERKS

On his debut, a worldly pop mystic from France builds a spooky château out of house beats

Cosmo Vitelli, né Benjamin Boguet, was born in 1974 in Montreuil, France, to parents who lived in Ivory Coast, Africa, where he spent the first decade of his life, dreaming of growing up and turning into Stevie Wonder. In France, Vitelli fell for house, played guitar in the indie group Perio, produced bedroom demos, started DJ'ing and remixing; the usual acoustic-into-Mac music résumé of a cool Eurodude. But *Clean* strikes out in a curiously bold way. Vitelli seems oblivious to the current French fashion for using beats as a kind of loud, repeating architecture; he envisions rhythm more as flowing, weirdly articulate sonic water. Although he can get things snapping, as on "Icons," an effective dance piece, Vitelli typically takes a more oddly buried tack, as on "Perfect Lies." He's an electro version of Thomas Dolby, building sturdy Walkman experiences out of air and mist.

JAMES HUNTER

## ROBBIE WILLIAMS

ESCAPOLOGY ★★

CAPITOL

The clown prince of Britpop croons about spiritual crises and women's asses with equal conviction

It's a great idea. A former boy-band star builds an impressive solo career around an unusual selling point: wit. Robbie Williams, formerly of early-'90s mega-group Take That, doesn't take his fame too seriously. He croons his best songs with swagger and a wink as he claims to have "put the Brit in celebrity." His fellow Englishmen seem to find him alternately charming and insufferable, but his fifth album makes a stronger case for the latter — the seven-minute song about a naughty monkey (which comes complete with vaguely Mexican-sounding trumpets) is a sure sign that he's out-Robbie-Williamsed himself. He's more appealing, though, on "Revolution," a smooth, affectionate duet with Rose Stone, and on the Britrock ballad "Monsoon," where Williams sings, "I'm here to make money and get laid." Being shallow and immature is both his strength and his weakness.

KELEFA SANNEH

## Blender Approved

The best new releases of the last three months



### AMERICAN HI-FI

THE ART OF LOSING

ISLAND

Brash, lively and as full of sugary punch as a college frat party, this Boston band mixes defiant lyrics, marching beats and sing-along choruses, giving pop-punk one more new spin.



### ELECTRIC SIX

DANGER! HIGH VOLTAGE

XL/BEGGARS GROUP

Jack White adds a sexy fake-Brit vocal to the title song of this EP by his Detroit mates. The hottest rock-disco since the Rolling Stones' "Miss You," it's number 1 in *Blender's* office two months running.



### BLOOD BROTHERS

BURN PIANO ISLAND, BURN

ARTISTDIRECT

These noise-rock vandals are short on attention spans and high on sugar buzzes. Their third album is spring-loaded with twisted tempos: messy, jarring and exhilarating.



### FABOLOUS

STREET DREAMS

DESERT STORM/ELEKTRA

Rap's ruling party boy can't be bothered to rhyme about anything but parties and oral sex. Timbaland and Rick Rock bring out the bounce in his monotone flow and quick-witted rhymes.

ON MARCH 10, 2003, THE POLICE WILL BE INDUCTED INTO THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME. IN HONOR OF THIS EVENT AND THEIR 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, NEWLY REMASTERED VERSIONS OF THE POLICE CATALOG WILL BE RELEASED IN SPECIAL FORMATS/PACKAGING AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, ON SACD (SUPER AUDIO CD).

The remastered CDs are packaged in digipaks and feature complete album graphics. Also available on SACD and packaged in a super jewel box that features complete album graphics (except for *Every Breath You Take: The Classics* which is SACD Hybrid [playable in both SACD and CD players] and packaged in a digipak.)

I ♥  
MUSIC

### SYNCHRONICITY



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# THE 40

## MOST POPULAR SONGS IN AMERICA

The only possible thing that Linkin Park and Céline Dion have in common? A lovely perch atop the *Blender* chart!

"We're #4, you know."

4



### 1 LINKIN PARK "SOMEWHERE I BELONG" METEORA

Could this be rap-metal's last stand? While Linkin Park's peers' CDs have all recently bombed — buh-bye, Papa Roach; it's been real, Crazy Town — this California quintet, maker of 2001's best-selling album, will ride in style alongside metal kingpins Limp Bizkit, Metallica, the Deftones and Mudvayne on the Summer Sanitarium tour in support of their new, unusually concise 38-minute CD.



Kid Rock and Sheryl Crow share hit, hat.

#### HOW WE DID IT

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay, and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."



POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"SOMEWHERE I BELONG"	LINKIN PARK	METEORA WARNER BROS.
2	"I DROVE ALL NIGHT"	CÉLINE DION	ONE HEART EPIC
3	"IN DA CLUB"	50 CENT	GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN' SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
4	"CLOCKS"	COLDPLAY	A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD EPIC
5	"PICTURE"	KID ROCK FEAT. SHERYL CROW	COCKY LAVA/ATLANTIC
6	"LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS"	GOOD CHARLOTTE	THE YOUNG AND THE HOPELESS DAYLIGHT/EPIC
7	"STRAIGHT OUT OF LINE"	GODSMACK	FACELESS REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL
8	"ALL THE THINGS SHE SAID"	T.A.T.U.	200 KMH IN THE WRONG LANE INTERSCOPE
9	"MESMERIZED"	JA RULE FEAT. ASHANTI	THE LAST TEMPTATION MURDER INC./DEF JAM
10	"GOSSIP FOLKS"	MISSY ELLIOTT FEAT. LUDACRIS	LINDER CONSTRUCTION GOLD M/INDELEKTRA
11	"LANDSLIDE"	DIXIE CHICKS	HOME OPEN WIDE/MONUMENT/COLUMBIA
12	"WANKSTA"	50 CENT	8 MILE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK SHADY/INTERSCOPE
13	"I'M WITH YOU"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	LET GO ARISTA
14	"DON'T KNOW WHY"	NORAH JONES	COME AWAY WITH ME BLUE NOTE
15	"THE ANTHEM"	GOOD CHARLOTTE	THE YOUNG AND THE HOPELESS DAYLIGHT/EPIC
16	"ALL I HAVE"	JENNIFER LOPEZ FEAT. LL COOL J	THIS IS ME... THEN EPIC
17	"YOUR BODY IS A WONDERLAND"	JOHN MAYER	ROOM FOR SQUARES A&R/COLUMBIA
18	"LIKE A STONE"	AUDIOSLAVE	AUDIOSLAVE INTERSCOPE/EPIC
19	"NOTHING AT ALL"	SANTANA FEAT. MUSIQ	SHAMAN ARISTA
20	"BEAUTIFUL"	SNOOP DOGG	PAID THA COST TO BE DA BOSS PRIORITY/CAPITOL
21	"UPI"	SHANIA TWAIN	UPI MERCURY NASHVILLE
22	"IGNITION"	R. KELLY	CHOCOLATE FACTORY JIVE
23	"BRING ME TO LIFE"	EVANESCENCE	DAREDEVIL ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK WIND-UP
24	"TAKE IT OFF"	THE DONNAS	SPEND THE NIGHT ATLANTIC
25	"SEND THE PAIN BELOW"	CHEVELLE	WONDER WHAT'S NEXT EPIC
26	"HOW YOU GONNA ACT LIKE THAT"	TYRESE	I WANNA GO THERE J RECORDS
27	"I'D DO ANYTHING"	SIMPLE PLAN	NO HELMETS, NO PADS... JUST BALLS LAVA/ATLANTIC
28	"COME AWAY WITH ME"	NORAH JONES	COME AWAY WITH ME BLUE NOTE
29	"A.D.I.D.A.S."	KILLER MIKE	MONSTER AQUERINA/COLUMBIA
30	"TIMES LIKE THESE"	FOO FIGHTERS	ONE BY ONE RCA
31	"CRY ME A RIVER"	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE	JUSTIFIED JIVE
32	"PDA"	INTERPOL	TURN ON THE BRIGHT LIGHTS MATADOR
33	"THE ART OF LOSING"	AMERICAN HI-FI	THE ART OF LOSING ISLAND
34	"BEAUTIFUL"	CHRISTINA AGUILERA	STRIPPED RCA
35	"'03 BONNIE & CLYDE"	JAY-Z FEAT. BEYONCÉ	THE BLUEPRINT 2: THE GIFT & THE CURSE ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM
36	"RUNNING"	NO DOUBT	ROCK STEADY INTERSCOPE
37	"HELL YEAH"	GINUWINE FEAT. BABY	THE SENIOR EPIC
38	"NO ONE KNOWS"	QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE	SONGS FOR THE DEAF INTERSCOPE
39	"FEEL"	ROBBIE WILLIAMS	ESCAPOLOGY VIRGIN
40	"TELL ME"	SMILEZ & SOUTHSTAR	CRASH THE PARTY ARTISTDIRECT

### 3 50 CENT "IN DA CLUB" GET RICH OR DIE TRYIN'

When a New York radio DJ recently asked, "Other than 50 Cent, what's going on in hip-hop right now?" he echoed the consensus that 2003 belongs to the bullet-scarred protégé of Eminem and the late Jam Master Jay. Prior to the rush release of *Get Rich...*, his 2002 indie



album, *Guess Who's Back?*, vaulted into the upper reaches of the *Billboard* album chart, and mix tapes featuring cut-and-paste duets with Tupac and Biggie rule the bootleg circuit.

### 6 GOOD CHARLOTTE "LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS" THE YOUNG AND THE HOPELESS

Having wrapped up a stint hosting MTV's *All Things Rock*, Maryland's Madden twins now move on to an earlier pursuit: hitting the road with New Found Glory for a tour beginning April 8. Charlotte's debut has lurked in the Top 20 for months, attesting to the perpetual appeal of MTV-endorsed, sk8ter-friendly bubble-punk.



### 7 GODSMACK "STRAIGHT OUT OF LINE" FACELESS

Upon its release, this calling card from Boston's premier Wiccan metal quartet was the most added single on rock radio. An appetite for all things grunge and an April



12 performance on *MadTV* will benefit *Faceless*, the follow-up to 2000's double-platinum *Awake*.

### 32 INTERPOL "PDA" TURN ON THE BRIGHT LIGHTS

Two years ago, the prospect of a stylish, retro New York band scoring commercial radio airplay was laughably far-fetched. But behold NYC's post-Strokes breakthrough act: Interpol's first single has cleaned up on



modern-rock radio. Look for a video for their follow-up cut, "Obstacle 1," on MTV2.



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# Death And Glory

The conscience of punk rock first hated the Beatles, then turned into the Beatles

## THE CLASH THE ESSENTIAL CLASH

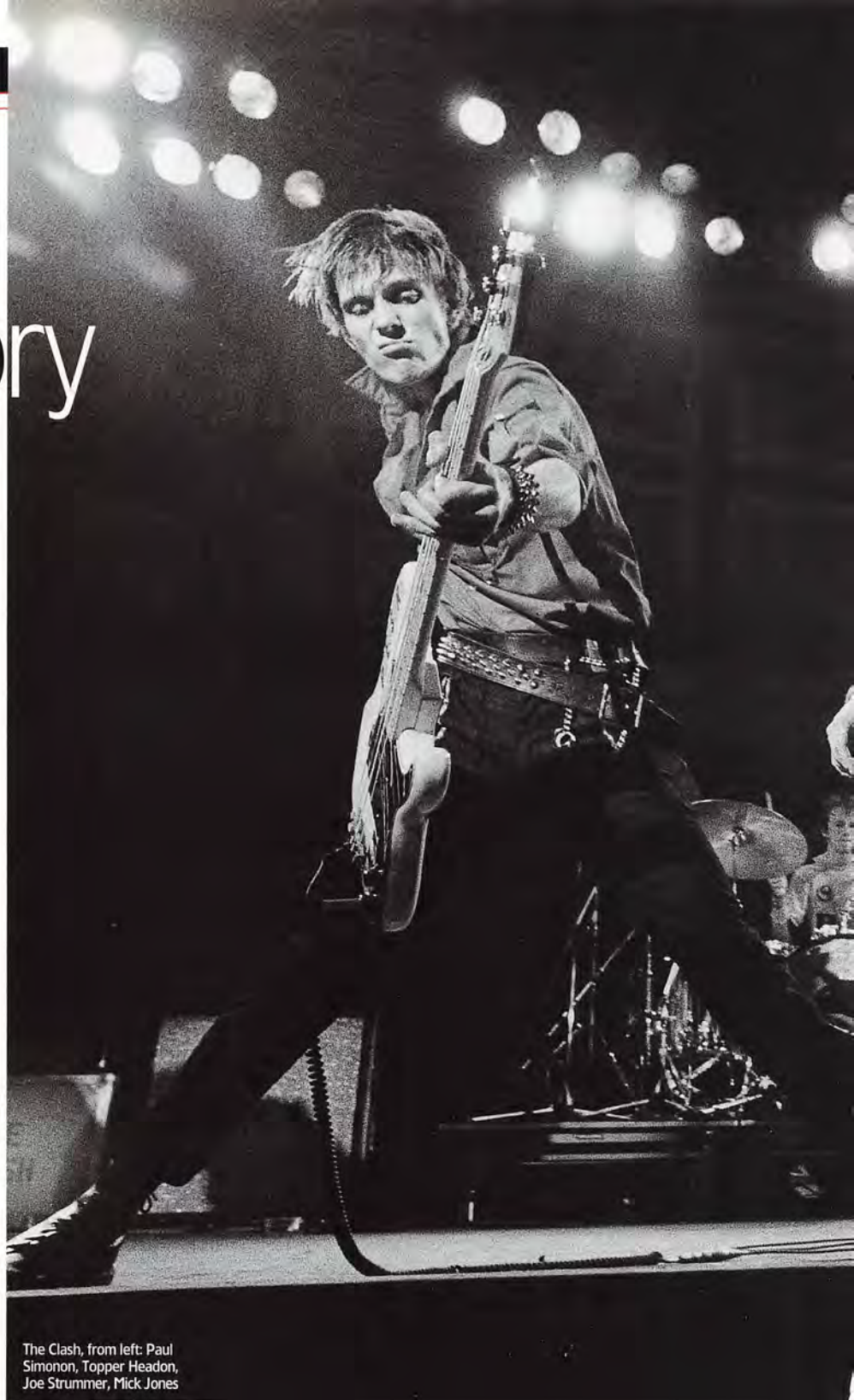
★★★★★

EPIC

 WHO WERE the Clash? A band that ranted against war and the military, railed against capitalism and raged against the machinery of the music business. But look what's happened to the Clash since 1985, when they released their last album. Their hit "Rock the Casbah" was broadcast over armed forces' radio during the Gulf War in 1991 to boost troops' morale. The band earned a huge paycheck around the same time, when "Should I Stay or Should I Go" was picked by Levi's for a TV ad. And their catalog has become a valuable asset of Sony, the multinational corporation that owns everything about the Clash except their souls.

The ironies of the Clash were never lost on the late Joe Strummer, who realized early on that "rock star" and "revolutionary" are impossible roles to combine. But this knowledge didn't lead to cynicism — only to greater determination and absolute passion. Second to the Sex Pistols in London's 1977 punk-rock hierarchy, the Clash came to outlast and surpass them. Sonically, they started with a no-frills policy that bordered on the puritanical but soon expanded into reggae, rap, rockabilly and even lounge, not always with success. They played every song as if it might be their last stab at immortality. All we need today, when "punk" is used to describe Avril Lavigne's wristbands, is a definitive distillation of who the Clash really were.

In the last months of his life, Strummer (aided by bandmates Mick Jones and Paul Simonon) curated this comprehensive overview of his band, and *The Essential Clash* beats all previous Clash collections. At 40 tracks across two CDs, it's a big advance even on guitarist Jones's 1988 compilation, *The Story of the Clash*; at the same time, it's more manageable than the 1991 triple-disc box set *The Clash On*



The Clash, from left: Paul Simonon, Topper Headon, Joe Strummer, Mick Jones

*Broadway*. Is everything here essential? Yes, pretty much. Is anything essential missing? Not a lot, except maybe "1977," in which the Clash brazenly proclaimed punk rock's Year Zero manifesto: "No Elvis, Beatles or the Rolling Stones in 1977!"

It's one more irony that the Clash are now hallowed icons of rock history, just like those dinosaur acts they denounced. But Strummer had come to terms with that as well. Chronologically sequenced, *The Essential Clash* is a proud document of

the band's journey. It charts their five-year rise from punky upstarts to stadium conquistadors. Unlike previous compilations, it also acknowledges the messy end, when only Strummer and bassist Simonon remained of the old gang (Jones and drummer Topper Headon had left amid much bickering), and the band bowed out with its last great song, "This Is England." Along the way we get every significant single they ever made, with the exception of one, "Remote Control" (a song they



never forgave their label for releasing; in fact, they wrote the follow-up, "Complete Control," as a protest).

The tale starts with the amphetamine momentum of their first sulphuric blasts. "Garageland," "White Riot" and "London's Burning" are compressed epics of urchin indignation. Then the lyrics acquire depth, subtlety and experience — "Tommy Gun" turns to confront the guerrilla chic the Clash had espoused. And their playing takes on greater power: The ice-pick clang

of "London Calling" is terrific; "Lost in the Supermarket," one of the group's most thoughtful songs, is an atmospheric reflection on the empty heart of consumer culture. They were ideologically committed but musically open-minded. They loved

**The Clash played every song as if it might be their last stab at immortality.**



reaching out to other styles, and the more their clenched fist loosened, the better their grasp became.

As their name implied, the Clash stood at the point where opposing forces collide. It can be noisy and dangerous standing at a cultural intersection, but they endured the contradictions in style and never looked for an easy way out. When Strummer died last December, the affection flowed like wine from original punks as well as inheritors, and here are 40 reasons why. *PAUL DU NOYER*

**JAMES CHANCE**

**IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE**  
★★★★

TIGER STYLE

**Box set captures confrontational legend of New York funk-punk — or is that punk-funk?**

The twitchy, angry, white James Brown of New York's nihilistic No Wave scene of the early '80s, James Chance dipped equally into funk, punk, jazz and disco. He pushed more uncomfortable buttons than anybody of his time, squonking horribly into his sax and demanding his audiences dance, or at least react.

**THE SCORE >>**

★★★★★  
**EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE**

★★★★  
**GREAT. CHECK IT OUT**

★★★  
**VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE**

★★  
**JUST OK**

★  
**WEAK**

His beats on this collection of four vintage albums and various ephemera slip from nervy to surprisingly danceable and fun, with oblique lyrical rants on race and sex ("He's almost black"/"That nigger's white," bicker two girls on "Buy the Contortions"). Nobody in the '80s other than Public Enemy confronted race so boldly. But what becomes a legend most is his jarring, cold, minimalist funk — mutated by pure punk-ass attitude — that has spawned edgy New York dance-rockers from Jon Spencer to the Rapture, the Liars and Radio 4.

BEN SISARIO

**AL GREEN**

**GREEN IS BLUES** ★★★  
**GETS NEXT TO YOU** ★★★★★

**LET'S STAY TOGETHER**  
★★★★★

**I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU**  
★★★★★

THE RIGHT STUFF/11

**Dapper Arkansas smoothie was the last great soul singer**

A soul revolution in four acts. These albums, originally released between 1970 and 1972, document the transformation of Al Green from a gifted, eccentric R&B singer to the final heir to a throne previously occupied by



Al Green, moments before putting the microphone in his lapel

Sam Cooke, Marvin Gaye and Otis Redding. *Green Is Blues* captures Green and producer Willie Mitchell struggling to find the right vehicle for that improbably sexy voice — it's a fascinating but decidedly mixed bag of covers, including the Beatles' "Get Back." *Gets Next to You* marks their first successful attempt to harness Green's smoldering power, while the parts lock into place seamlessly on *Let's Stay Together* — after the glorious affirmation of the title track, wedding bands would never be the same. *I'm Still in Love With You* is, if anything, even better: From the mercilessly taut groove of "I'm Glad You're Mine" to the ethereal, elastic

"Simply Beautiful," it's an undeniable soul classic, ridiculously sublime.

ALAN LIGHT

**THE HUMAN LEAGUE**

**REPRODUCTION** ★★★★★

**TRAVELOGUE** ★★

**DARE/LOVE AND DANCING**  
★★★★★

CAROLINE

**The electronic ABBA and the robot skeletons in their closet**

No other band has experienced as strange a reverse evolution as that of the Human League. They began as meaning-laden, serious electronic experimentalists, but at the beginning of the '80s transformed into a lightweight, synthesized ABBA, with delicious love songs, worldwide hits and dancing girls. On 1979's *Reproduction*, the band was in thrall to Kraftwerk's machine rhythms and the possibilities of a robotic future — such things wore heavily on the mind in 1970s Sheffield, the English Detroit. The League's manifesto ("synthesizers and vocals only") produced less-memorable tunes for 1980's *Travelogue*, so half the band left to form "Britfunk" act Heaven 17. The rest recruited two young girls at a disco and told them they were now singers. Improbably, the new League recorded

**SILLY PEPPERS**

**At the start, these tattooed punks had more guts than skill**

**RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS**

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS ★★

FREAKY STYLEY ★★

THE UPLIFT MOFO PARTY PLAN  
★★★★

MOTHER'S MILK ★★★

EMI/CAPITOL

**>>** TAKE FOUR HIGH-SCHOOL buddies with a supersized thirst for Hollywood kicks, give them a fat recording contract, watch them grow up (or not) in public: That's the Red Hot Chili Peppers' story. When they recorded their self-titled debut in 1984, the Peppers were young, dumb and full of cum. They could barely carry a tune, but they sure could make funny faces.

The debut features the ash-can croaks of Anthony Kiedis and the seeds of their punk-rap fusion, especially "Police Helicopter," a tribute to their L.A. punk heroes, the Minutemen. Then they went on the road with the smallest wardrobe budget in rock history.

They came back with *Freaky Styley* in 1985 after a lineup change that

added two pals, drummer Jack Irons and guitarist Hillel Slovak. *Styley* was produced by funk godfather George Clinton, who made a watered-down P-Funk record — in its title, "Hollywood (Africa)" announced the bridge the Peppers wanted to build, but the grooves were still beyond them. It wasn't until 1987's *Uplift Mofo Party Plan* that they matched the attitude with music, on their anthem "Special Secret Song Inside" (a.k.a. "Party On Your Pussy"). The Chili Peppers were trying to fuse punk and rap at a time when both were strictly underground, and the sound (as well as the audience) had to be cobbled together out of dirt.

After two false starts, Hollywood vices nearly pulled them into oblivion. Slovak died of a heroin overdose, and Irons split in anger over the band's rampant drug use. With John Frusciante on guitar and Chad Smith on drums, the Peppers recorded *Mother's Milk* in 1989. Thrashing like a sack full of cats, they became both survivors and celebrators of the West Coast freaky style, preaching liberation ("Higher Ground") but still grabbing their crotches ("Knock Me Down") as well. *RJ SMITH*



The Chili Peppers' group therapy session was not going as planned.

**> The Chili Peppers were young, dumb and full of cum.**

From top: David Conco/Petra Ltd.; Ebet Roberts



*Dare*, simply the most perfect electronic-pop record ever made: beautiful, luxurious and packed with hits ("Don't You Want Me", "Love Action"). In these remastered reissues, it's supplemented by *Love and Dancing*, a likeable early remix album, but the original is essential, even if you've never worn eyeliner.

ANDREW HARRISON

## SKIP JAMES

### RARE AND UNRELEASED

★★★

VANGUARD

**Quirky country bluesman favored by Robert Johnson, Eric Clapton and the Lovin' Spoonful**

With his weird open-chord guitar tunings, an angular piano style that bridged barrelhouse and Thelonious Monk, a ghostly, floating falsetto voice and constant careening between church and juke joint, Skip James was one of the most mercurial and elusive Mississippi country bluesmen. And also one of the most respected by connoisseurs: Robert Johnson recycled verses from James, and Eric Clapton cut his "I'm So Glad" with Cream. Even these 1967 outtakes — a rollicking overhaul of Hoagy Carmichael's "Lazy Bones," the quiet desperation of "My Own Blues," the terminal regret of "Sporting Life Blues" — convey uncommon range and originality. It isn't the best starting point for newcomers, but unlike most outtakes collections, it adds punch to his unfortunately thin catalog.

JOHN MORTHLAND

## MORPHINE

### THE BEST OF MORPHINE 1992-1995

★★★

RYKODISC

**Requiem for cult hero Mark Sandman, who died with his boots on**

Playing what leader Mark Sandman dubbed "low rock," Morphine got a lot of sound out of its minimal setup. The guitarless Boston trio left space between its bluesy notes, with Dana Colley's chugging sax, Billy Conway's crisp drums and Sandman's

rubbery two-string slide bass making an elegant rumble. Hazy and anxious at the same time, Morphine would have been high-concept mood music except for Sandman's wry hipster crooning, full of sleazy charisma. "Candy" is a touching portrait of a self-destructive lover, while the itchy "Thursday" turns adultery into a hilarious comedy of errors. A few rarities, including the hypnotic "Pretty Face," compensate for this 16-track set's omission of Morphine's two stellar major-label albums. It's a fitting ode to Sandman, who died of a heart attack onstage in 1999 and deserves to be remembered.

JON YOUNG

## MOTT THE HOOPLE

### GREATEST HITS (EXPANDED EDITION)

★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

**Cult Britrockers were the young dudes of the early '70s**

Rarely has a band been as consumed by rock lore as Mott the Hoople. The brilliant "All the Way From Memphis," from 1973 — heard here, tragically, in its edited form — is an awe-struck tribute to the genre's founding fathers: "It's a mighty long way down rock & roll/From the Liverpool docks to the Hollywood Bowl." They reprise the theme on a camped-up slice of nostalgia called "Golden Age of Rock 'N' Roll" — and on "Ballad of Mott," singer Ian Hunter is even bold enough to mythologize his own band. Given that their music was an inspired knot of glam-rock, Dylan-esque articulation and Stony raunch, it all sounds wonderful — especially 1972's glorious, pro-gay "All the Young Dudes," written by David Bowie and given to Mott, when they were struggling, as evidence of his admiration.

JOHN HARRIS

## NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE

### NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE

★★★★

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

**In a side project from the Grateful Dead, Jerry Garcia played songs about marijuana. Shocking!**

Conceived in 1969 by songwriter John "Marmaduke" Dawson and Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia, who had recently discovered the melancholy joys of the pedal-steel guitar, the New Riders debuted as the Dead's opening act prior to releasing their twangy, tuneful debut in 1971. More trad than rad, the group's smooth country harmonies sweetened lyrics about dope running ("Henry"), rock-star lovin' and leavin' ("Portland Woman") and environmental pillage ("Last →

# MÖTLEY CRÜE

## GREATEST HITS



- The First "GREATEST HITS"
- Over 74 Minutes - 17 Hits
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- Digitally Remastered



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## HEAVY TRAFFIC



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RACING SUPERSTAR

---

**FLEETWOOD MAC RUMOURS**  
REPRISE

"I bought a '67 Camaro recently, with the original speaker system. Fleetwood Mac is perfect for a drive."



The New York Dolls mourn New York's mascara shortage of 1973.

Lonely Eagle"). Timeless yet of its time, the group gives a delightful pop spin to "I Don't Know You" and "Whatcha Gonna Do" ("... on the planet today?") before descending into the psychedelic miasma of "Dirty Business."

RICHARD GEHR

## NEW YORK DOLLS

### THE MILLENNIUM COLLECTION

★★★★

UNIVERSAL

**Bite-size intro to rock's cross-dressing champions of sleaze**

Call it proto-punk, call it meta-glam — it doesn't matter. To the New York Dolls, music was just an excuse for outrageousness. They grabbed all the sleaziest rock available to them in the early '70s — Mick Jagger, Bo Diddley, T. Rex, flirty Brill Building pop — and jacked up its androgynous swagger, simultaneously glorifying and ridiculing it. For a band that released only two albums, a hits comp shouldn't be difficult, and though this one is skimpy, it gets all the essential vamps — "Personality Crisis," "Trash," "Stranded in the Jungle," "Puss 'n' Boots" — adding only one non-LP track ("Lone Star Queen") already known to collectors. The Dolls saw rock's excesses and superlative boasts, and dived right in; a generation of punks and New Wavers soon followed.

BEN SISARIO

## LIONEL RICHIE

### THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION

★★★★

UNIVERSAL

**Mellow, considered Top 40 soul from a singer who steered right down the middle of the road**

This L.A.-via-Alabama slickster, an iconic father of the black-prep look, seized pop-soul, both as a member of the Commodores in the '70s and as an

'80s solo franchise. The lovey-dovey showcases — "Still," "Truly" and "Endless Love," in which Richie pants at Diana Ross — are models of effective mid-tempo balladry, a terrifying breath away from kitsch. Nowadays, Mariah Carey or Usher might kill for them. Elsewhere, Richie is awesome: the harmonically sneaky verse of "You Are" that dissolves into a gospel-keyed bridge of sweet soul; the rare country air at the beginning of "Stuck On You"; the tremendously influential Caribbean lilt of "All Night Long (All Night)." OK, so he was never Al Green, and soul purists tremble at every careful note. But sometimes Richie, clever guy, could make you forget the high end.

JAMES HUNTER

## SONIC YOUTH

### DIRTY

★★★★

UNIVERSAL

**In 1992, New York's kings of mayhem flirted with grunge for a moment**

At grungemania's heady peak, veteran New York noise-rock band Sonic Youth hired *Nevermind's* Butch Vig/Andy

Wallace production/mix team for an idiosyncratic take on Northwest aggro-garage. With a scrupulously abrasive attack that was unafraid to be discordantly catchy, SY erupted into riff-rock glory, spawning such warhorses as "Sugar Kane." They'd never get so rockist again, nor so (relatively) derivative. (A 16-track bonus CD of alternately masturbatory and revelatory rarities and rehearsal tapes ranges farther afield.) *Dirty* features uncharacteristically earnest lyrics — raging broadsides like "Youth Against Fascism," in which Thurston Moore rants about the elder George Bush, "The president sucks; he's a war-pig fuck!" A decade later, the protest remains relevant.

MICHAEL AZERRAD

## LISA STANSFIELD

### BIOGRAPHY

BMG HERITAGE

**British pop-soul songbird known for her silly spit curl and creamy voice**

A heavily accented northern Brit, Lisa Stansfield is basically *Frasier's* Daphne Moon singing in the husky-sexy bedroom-soul voice that Niles Crane hears in his dreams. Stansfield came of age at the end of the '80s on the house hit "People Hold On," included here; listeners assumed she was black, and Philly-inflected, saxophone-heavy hits ensued. Sadly, this was back when R&B was neither crazed and exciting (as now) nor impassioned and righteous (as in the '60s and '70s), so Stansfield was often saddled with material straight from the smooth soul-jazz FM station of your most vivid nightmares. She has her moments, like "This Is the Right Time," "Change" and her best song, "All Around the World" — just not enough of them.

ANDREW HARRISON

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### COLD CHILLIN': CHOICE CUTS

★★★★

LANDSPEED

**Hits from the mid-'80s hip-hop label that bridged the old and new schools**

A decade before Nelly's current beef with KRS-One, Roxanne Shanté hit him with this dis: "KRS-One, you should go on vacation/With that name sounding like a wack radio station." OK, it wasn't the most cutting barb, but while the artists on the *Queens*, New York-based label Cold Chillin' were notoriously boastful, they were lighthearted, too. Biz Markie, the star of this collection, mixed arrogance with a comical, self-deprecating delivery ("Nobody Beats the Biz"), while Masta Ace warned that his enemies would "get chewed worse than Starburst" ("Brooklyn Battles"). Label founder and producer Marley Marl's beats ditched the synths and



Little-known fact: The Who's Pete Townshend is actually nine feet tall.

**BEN HARPER**

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pounding drum machines of Def Jam's signature sound for sample collages, ushering hip-hop into the new school.

JONAH WEINER

## THE WHO

WHO'S NEXT DELUXE EDITION  
★★★★★

MCA

The Who's greatest album now comes with a live concert and puzzling bonus tracks

After years of listening to "Won't Get Fooled Again," it's easy to feel cynical about a deluxe repackaging of this much beloved (and much reissued) 1971 classic, the Who's delayed, troubled *Tommy* follow-up. Don't. In addition to a 14-song live CD from April 1971, this includes six selections from the band's first attempt at the album, at the Record Plant in New York. (The final version was cut at London's Olympia studios a few months later.) In addition to a ferocious "Baby Don't Do It" with Mountain guitarist Leslie West, the bonus tracks include a radically different "Love Ain't for Keeping" and a version of "Won't Get Fooled Again" that completely misses the mark. Who's surprised?

J.D. CONSIDINE

## WARREN ZEVON

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE/  
A LEAF IN THE WIND ★★

EMI

SENTIMENTAL HYGIENE  
★★★★

TRANSVERSE CITY ★★

VIRGIN

An ailing troublemaker's stormy past

A master of what Jackson Browne calls "song noir," Warren Zevon has been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, and the reissues have already begun. His 1969 debut, *Wanted Dead or Alive*, finds him searching for a style, with embryonic tender ballads and macabre rockers. Ten bonus tracks make up a previously unreleased second album, *A Leaf in the Wind*, a lukewarm blend of sensitive vocals and five atmospheric instrumentals. Fast-forward to 1987, when the newly sober Zevon delivers the powerful *Sentimental Hygiene*, featuring the moving ballad "Reconsider Me" and the sardonic "Detox Mansion." Burdened by cluttered arrangements, 1989's *Transverse City* adds sci-fi paranoia: "Nobody's in Love This Year" glimpses the tender heart inside this top-notch wiseguy.

JOHN YOUNG



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MOTOWN

Through the '60s, Smokey infiltrated white America's bedrooms with ecstatic make-out songs.



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EPIC/LEGACY

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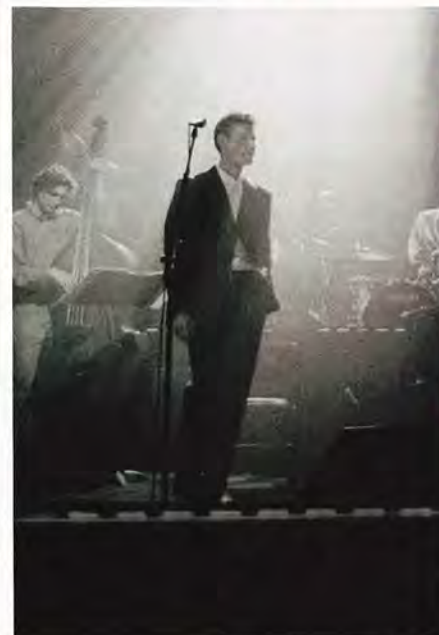
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Zwan, from left: Matt Sweeney, Jimmy Chamberlin, Billy Corgan, Paz Lenchantin, David Pajo



# I Believe I Can Fly

In their Chicago homecoming, Billy Corgan's Zwan take off

## ZWAN

MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY, CHICAGO

JANUARY 27, 2003 ★★★★★

PIPE CLEANER—THIN and pale as porcelain, Billy Corgan stands on a makeshift stage in a cavernous Chicago museum and sings about “my place of destiny.” Above him, like still-lives from bygone eras, hover prop planes and a Boeing 727 that once belonged to cash-strapped United Airlines. The relics overhead seem a bad omen for Corgan as he relaunches his career with a new band. Is there any destiny left, or, like Alice in Chains and Jane’s Addiction, is he ready to be stuffed and mounted in the Lollapalooza Museum?

As usual, Corgan is aiming high. Tonight concludes a six-night string of hometown concerts, a warmup to the world tour for *Mary Star of the Sea*, the first album of the rest of Corgan’s rock-star life. Only two years ago, he grounded the Smashing Pumpkins after a pair of poorly received high-concept art-metal albums (*Machina I and II*) and a decade when his melancholia ruled the alternative nation. Then he reemerged with a new quintet

to create an elegant architectural support. On “Honestly,” Corgan plays chugging steam-train riffs, while Pajo and Sweeney rock cathedral bells; Pajo ushers in “Ride a Black Swan” with astral sound effects, then decorates the galloping chorus with seesaw figures and sustains. Zwan’s shows revel in pop pleasures, signaled a few nights earlier by irony-free covers of the Association’s sighing 1967 ballad “Never My Love” and Alice Cooper’s 1971 hair-metal prototype “Eighteen.” “Declarations of Love” could come from that same era of AM-radio innocence, and Corgan even spreads his arms to declare, “Baby, we were born to love.” Someone has drawn a smiley face on the great Pumpkin.

But Zwan also play a handful of unrecorded songs that show a darker side: Corgan’s guitar on “Spilled Milk” recalls Black Sabbath riff surgeon Tony Iommi, while “Riverview” is a sexier, more sinister cousin to the Pumpkins’ cruising ode “1979.” “Jesus, I,” a highlight of Zwan’s debut, morphs onstage from thrash-metal into hand-clapping gospel, retaining the audacity that distinguished the Pumpkins from other grunge-born bands.

Closing the homestand, Corgan straps on a cherry-red Flying V guitar and storms through a 13-minute version of *Mary Star’s* title track. Chamberlin strafes the droning guitars with volley after volley — a blur of wrists, forearms and sticks behind the kit. As the noise reaches a crescendo, it sounds as though the 727 carcass lurking above the stage has roared to life. The task before Corgan seems equally improbable: Rock permits few second acts as successful as the first. But at the moment, Zwan sound ready to shoot the works anyway, or go down in flames trying. GREG KOT



Billy Corgan: “Any requests? Just kidding!”



The real reason for **breaks** between sets.



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➤ A terrific faux-concert film "reunites" some earnest, ridiculous folk heroes.

**THE GOOD!**

# QUEER AS FOLK!

Hippies! Banjos! Valium! Spinal Tap go unplugged — with hilarious results! By Ted Lambert

## A MIGHTY WIND

**DIRECTED BY** Christopher Guest

**STARRING** Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, Harry Shearer, Fred Willard, Ed Begley Jr.

➤➤ IT WAS 19 YEARS ago today (or thereabouts) a fake British guitarist named Nigel Tufnel taught heavy-metal fans to say, "This one goes to 11!" And the legend of Spinal Tap was born.

In 1984, Christopher Guest made heavy metal hilarious with his slack-jawed, clueless Nigel in Rob Reiner's *This Is Spinal Tap*. Since then, Guest has kept his audiences roaring with Tap-style mockumentaries. *Waiting for Guffman* lampooned small-town community theater, and *Best in Show* nailed dog beauty pageants. Now comes *A Mighty Wind*, fusing these earlier films' wicked satire into a terrific faux-concert film that "reunites" some earnest, ridiculous and entirely fictitious '60s folk heroes.

In *Wind*, the son of a legendary folk impresario reunites his father's three greatest acts for a televised New York tribute concert. The New Main Street Singers are an oppressively cheery Up With People parody; Mitch & Mickey (Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara) are a drippy duo; and the dour Folksmen reunite *Spinal Tap*'s Guest, Harry Shearer and Michael McKean.

Guest's mockumentary style lets his finely crafted characters shine. Ed Begley's Swedish-born public-TV exec spouts an endless

stream of Yiddishisms, and Fred Willard is incomparable as an oily, hideously coifed and -tailed manager. But the real star is Levy, whose hippie hero Mitch is reduced in the modern era to a deranged, shell-shocked mouse.

Like *Spinal Tap*, *Wind* spends a lot of time onstage, which could

have been tedious. But the newer, gentler songs are nearly as witty as "Big Bottom": The Folksmen's "Eat at Joe's," an ode to a diner's faulty road sign, inspires the sing-along line "Ea\_a\_\_oe's." But Guest's greatest accomplishment here is being the first man to take a bunch of fake folk songs to 11.

## OVERPOWERED BY FOLK!

Playing soft, pleasant, weepy music . . . can get you killed. Horribly!

### RICHARD FARIÑA 29

Hello: Songwriter, Bob Dylan pal, author of cult coming-of-age novel  
**Goodbye, 1966:** Leaving his book party, gets tossed off motorcycle going 90 on a 30 mph road in northern California

### MAMA CASS 32

Hello: Lilted harmony goddess of the Mamas and the Papas  
**Goodbye, 1974:** Reportedly chokes on sandwich in bed, inhaling vomit, but autopsy reveals heart attack

### TIM BUCKLEY 28 and JEFF BUCKLEY 30

Hello: Tragic folk-rock father-and-son heartthrobs  
**Goodbye, 1975:** Tim overdoses on heroin-morphine cocktail  
**Goodbye, 1997:** Jeff drowns in Mississippi River undertow

### PHIL OCHS 35

Hello: Sixties leftie songwriter and self-styled "singing journalist"  
**Goodbye, 1976:** By now erratic and homeless, hangs self in sister's home

### SANDY DENNY 31

Hello: Singer, England's renaissance-faire-esque Fairport Convention  
**Goodbye, 1978:** Falls down stairs and suffers brain hemorrhage

### HARRY CHAPIN 38

Hello: Sensitive singer and writer of "Cat's in the Cradle"

**Goodbye, 1981:** Tractor-trailer demolishes his Volkswagen on expressway

### NICK DRAKE 26

Hello: Melancholy champion of psychedelics and obtuse lyrics  
**Goodbye, 1974:** Accidentally overdoses on antidepressants at parents' house





THE BAD!

**BUFFALO SOLDIERS**

**DIRECTED BY** Gregor Jordan

**STARRING** Joaquin Phoenix, Ed Harris, Scott Glenn, Anna Paquin

THOUGHT EAST Germany was messy before the Wall came down? You've never seen Joaquin Phoenix as a bored, smug renegade soldier, managing a heroin lab and screwing the sergeant's daughter on a U.S. army base in Germany. The smarmy Phoenix's love interest (Anna Paquin) is woefully bland, and the usually intense Ed Harris twiddles his thumbs as a bumbling commander. *Buffalo Soldiers* should've been another *Stripes*, but its preachy view of U.S. military arrogance reportedly provoked one Sundance Film Festival viewer to chuck a bottle at Paquin's head. Maybe the filmgoer thought the movie was anti-American. Or that it sucked.



& THE INDIE!

**LILYA 4-EVER**

**DIRECTED BY** Lukas Moodysson

**STARRING** Oksana Akinshina, Artyom Bogucharsky

THE DIRECTOR of 2001's *Together*, a bittersweet comedy about a 1970s Swedish commune, does a shocking turnaround with this brilliantly acted story about a 16-year-old girl who wants out of her miserable life in a drab Russian suburb. Abandoned by her mother, Lilya's only real pal is Volodya, a glue-sniffing 11-year-old boy. Her luck changes when a boyfriend promises a job in Sweden — and gets worse after he betrays her to abusive pimps. Oksana Akinshina plays her horrific role with an engrossing, inspiring spirit — one that moviegoers may never forget.

**Blender Approved**

The best movies of the last three months



**LAUREL CANYON**

Sex, dope and rock & roll in a plush L.A. hillside mansion overrun with Britrockers — and Kate Beckinsale. *Yow!*



**CITY OF GOD**

A sharp, shocking, ultraviolent samba through the slums of Rio de Janeiro with gangs of teenage (and younger) drug lords.

**LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?**



**ROB THOMAS**

Santana's little helper and Matchbox Twenty master

"MY BIG FAT Greek Wedding. I didn't want to like it — I didn't want to buy the hype — but it's just funny. It's a damn funny movie."

**AND THE REST ...**

DON'T MISS



**ANGER MANAGEMENT**

**DIRECTED BY** Peter Segal

**STARRING** Adam Sandler, Jack Nicholson, Marisa Tomei

**THE PITCH** Sandler, convicted of air-rage crimes, undergoes training by the psychotic Nicholson — who moves into Sandler's home.

**THE VERDICT** Watching smilin' Jack abuse covering Adam is worth the price of admission. Cameos by other hotheads (Roger Clemens, Rudy Giuliani) are icing on the cake.



**DREAMCATCHER**

**DIRECTED BY** Lawrence Kasdan

**STARRING** Thomas Jane, Morgan Freeman, Jason Lee, Tom Sizemore, Donnie Wahlberg

**THE PITCH** Four friends linked by telepathic powers catch up for a hunting trip. But the big game's a little too big — they run into an alien force that threatens to conquer mankind.

**THE VERDICT** A creep-out — are there any other kind? — based on Stephen King's novel promises to be *The Ring* of this spring.

DON'T RUSH



**THE GUYS**

**DIRECTED BY** Jim Simpson

**STARRING** Anthony LaPaglia, Sigourney Weaver

**THE PITCH** In the first September 11 movie, a journalist helps a fire chief write eulogies for four men killed at the World Trade Center.

**THE VERDICT** It's a noble effort, and LaPaglia proves his worth as a great dramatic actor with understated, affecting shock and grief. But the stiff, stilted Weaver acts like she's... acting.



**DIRTY PRETTY THINGS**

**DIRECTED BY** Stephen Frears

**STARRING** Audrey Tautou, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Sergi López, Sophie Okonedo, Benedict Wong

**THE PITCH** A Nigerian employee at a posh London hotel stumbles upon evidence of a murder while trying to protect a Turkish chambermaid from deportation.

**THE VERDICT** Love and black-market organs make for a highly disturbing double feature — it's a crime thriller *and* a gross-out.

DON'T BOTHER



**BULLETPROOF MONK**

**DIRECTED BY** Paul Hunter

**STARRING** Chow Yun-Fat, Seann William Scott, Jamie (née James) King, Mako

**THE PITCH** An immortal kung-fu master seeks a worthy successor to protect a sacred scroll. He selects *American Pie*'s Stifler. Nice move.

**THE VERDICT** Hong Kong chop-socky brought to U.S. soil, karate-kicking viewers with digital effects, mystical mumbo-jumbo and a nü-metal soundtrack. *Ouch!*



**SHAOLIN SOCCER**

**DIRECTED BY** Stephen Chow

**STARRING** Stephen Chow

**THE PITCH** A martial-arts comedy smash from Hong Kong tells of a *Bad News Bears*-ish soccer team of former Shaolin monks who score goals with kung-fu powers.

**THE VERDICT** Something got lost in the translation. Gets old fast, even though Miramax shaved 20 minutes off the original (which might explain where all the jokes went).

David Appleby/Miramax Films (*Buffalo Soldiers*); Lukas Moodysson/New Yorker Films (*Lilya 4-Ever*); Neal Preston/Sony Pictures Classics (*Laurel Canyon*); Phillip Y. Caruso/SPIPSP (*Anger Management*); Robyn Holland/Focus Features (*The Guys*); Shaolin Soccer: City of God; Jen Lowery/LFI (Thomas)



Johnny Knoxville: Jackass by name, almost horribly mangled corpse by nature

# SMASHING!

It's the funniest violent movie ever! By Clark Collis

## JACKASS: THE MOVIE

**DIRECTED BY**  
Jeff Tremaine

**STARRING**  
Johnny Knoxville, Bam Margera, Chris Pontius, Steve-O, Dave England, Ehren McGhehey, Jason Acuña, Tony Hawk, Henry Rollins, Spike Jonze

PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO

☆☆☆☆

➤➤ AT ONE POINT in the course of this DVD's many commentaries, outtakes and making-of materials, *Jackass* regular Ehren McGhehey is asked how the movie version of the show is different from the hit TV program that inspired it. His reply: "It's a bigger screen."

That, and the fact that his hair has clearly just been attacked by some clippers-bearing *Jackass*-mate, will do little to alter many critics' opinion that Johnny Knoxville and crew are the most retarded of so-called "entertainers": Basically, they're sub-sophomoric idiots whose demented, life-threatening pranks, evolutionarily speaking, make them little more advanced than baboons who get off on flashing their butts.

**There are actually some very sharp minds at work here.**



Certainly, this big-screen version of MTV's hit show is not short of butts itself, whether they're used as launch pads for fireworks, bait for hungry alligators or, most memorably, entry points for toy cars. Yet for all the knuckle-dragging shtick, it should be obvious that there are actually some very sharp minds at work here. You may doubt their sanity — would you snort wasabi until you puke, or allow whale sharks to "gum" live shrimp from your underwear? — but not their smarts or their sense of humor.

Take the opening gag. Knoxville rents an immaculate white car and destroys it in a *Jackass*-organized demolition derby — and then returns its remains to the infuriated rental agency. It's already become a genius idea, but the real zinger is Knoxville's deadpan explanation: "Uh . . . I hit a dog."

Ironically, this most low-budget of ventures does lose a little in its translation back to the small screen — particularly hearing a multitude of fellow cinemagoers simultaneously gasping, "He's not *really* gonna do that!" But by the end, all right-minded viewers understand that the ritual warning about our not trying this at home isn't there merely to keep us alive, but because no other human punching bag could possibly be as funny.

## 8 MILE

UNIVERSAL HOME VIDEO

☆☆☆

This gritty retelling of Eminem's preface struggles in gritty Detroit, starring the man himself, may have made a ton at the box office, but it isn't likely to go down as an all-time music-movie classic. Some of the blame must lie with the rapper, whose verbiage off the mic was about 98 percent less convincing — but *Mod Squad* screenwriter Scott Silver's decision to steal various plot points from *Flashdance* doesn't help much either.

## ADAM SANDLER'S EIGHT CRAZY NIGHTS

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

☆☆

Adam Sandler's second movie-of-the-month finds him on more familiarly scatological, albeit animated, territory, voicing both a Hannukah-hating ne'er-do-well and the lovely old coot determined to redeem him through the power of . . . basketball. Preposterous? Yes. Funny? Not really, even if the scene when the geezer is covered in a layer of frozen excrement, and then licked clean by a herd of deer, does represent some kind of holiday-movie first.

## THE ALEX COX COLLECTION

ANCHOR BAY ENTERTAINMENT

☆☆☆

They don't come much weirder than Alex Cox. The contents of this British director's career-spanning box set include his genius punk-noir-sci-fi debut, *Repo Man*, as well as 1998's *Three Businessmen*, in which Cox wanders from continent to continent in search of dinner. Also included is *Straight to Hell*, Joe Strummer's 1987 spaghetti Western, and an abundance of Cox's entertaining commentaries.

## GHOST SHIP

WARNER HOME VIDEO

☆☆☆

*Gee, I wonder what this movie's about.* Actually, this by-the-numbers thriller does have its share of surprises, such as a decent cast headed by Gabriel Byrne, Ron Eldard and the way-spunky Julianna Margulies as seafaring salvagers who bite off more than they can chew when they discover an abandoned ocean liner. And its gory prologue alone will put you off eating salami forever.



Ron Eldard: "No way is this a phallic symbol!"

## PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

☆☆☆

The latest from Paul Thomas Anderson, the young director of the very long movies *Boogie Nights* and *Magnolia*, was championed at *Blender* World Headquarters as, variously, "the most romantic film ever made" and "the biggest crock of bullshit in film history." While the needle of truth tilts toward the latter, Adam Sandler's nuanced performance as a lovelorn, psychotic toilet-plunger salesman may have extended his career's life expectancy by 30 years. (What next? Rob Schneider is Hamlet?)

## RED DRAGON

UNIVERSAL HOME VIDEO

☆☆☆

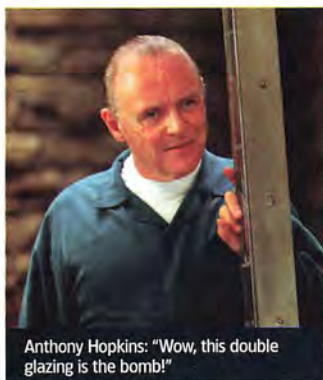
In which the Hannibal Lecter franchise revisits Thomas Harris's novel to remind us what Anthony Hopkins's



Eminem berates his roomie for inviting too many dinner guests.

Clockwise from top left: Paramount/Courtesy of Everett Collection; Vince Vautour/Warner Bros.; Courtesy of Everett Collection





Anthony Hopkins: "Wow, this double glazing is the bomb!"

silver-tongued cannibal did in his pre-Clarice Starling years (the answer, unsurprisingly, is eat people). If competent enough, with fine support from Ed Norton and Ralph Fiennes, the result remains in the shadow of the previous *Red Dragon* adaptation, *Manhunter*, and notably of Brian Cox's gold medal-deserving turn as the not-so-good doctor.

**THE RING**

DREAMWORKS HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★

A horror-movie buff who missed last fall's remake of the Japanese movie *Ringu* is a horror-movie buff who has never truly thrown his popcorn toward the ceiling in sheer creeped-out terror. Naomi Watts stars as a reporter and single mom on the trail of a video that kills anyone who pops it in the VCR. Needless to say, this is *not* a film to watch on tape.

**SPY KIDS 2: THE ISLAND OF LOST DREAMS**

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★

After making his name with violent, schlocky movies, Robert Rodriguez has emerged as a master of kiddie-friendly

blockbusters — and certainly, there's little in this crystal meth-paced sequel for either parent or child to complain about. Our pint-size heroes set out to save the world a second time with help from a score of terrific cameos (Bill Paxton, Steve Buscemi, Ricardo Montalban) and a gag-laden script ("Wait 'til I tell Mom you tried to take over the world again!"). The disc includes deleted footage.

**WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?**

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★

When it was released in 1988, this live-action/cartoon film noir couldn't have seemed more state-of-the-art. Fifteen years of computer-animated advances later, Roger and company might as well be cave drawings, but the Kathleen Turner-voiced Jessica Rabbit remains the most lust-inducing cartoon character in history, and the script sizzles with one-liners. ("How much do you know about show business?" "Only that there is no business like it, no business I know.") This double disc includes cartoon shorts, deleted shorts and commentary by director Robert Zemeckis.



The Ring's Naomi Watts finds out what's been blocking her toilet.

**MUSIC DVDS** BY ROB KEMP



**THE JAM: 1977-1982 THE COMPLETE JAM ON FILM**

UNIVERSAL HOME VIDEO

★★★★

The Jam were the mod heroes of England's class of '77 — guitarist-songwriter Paul Weller owed more to the Who's heavy R&B than to the Sex Pistols. This double DVD compiles every Jam video and European TV appearance, including an electrifying "All Around the World" from Marc Bolan's short-lived 1977 TV show, and five years later, punishing the studio audience of Britain's *The Tube* with a nine-song punk valediction.



**I AM TRYING TO BREAK YOUR HEART**

PLEXIFILM

★★★

Wilco, the roots-rock Radiohead, star in Sam Jones's first feature film, a gorgeous black-and-white doc capturing the band's struggles with its label and one another. And it's no love letter: Leader Jeff Tweedy resembles a control freak, firing a bandmate for insufficient deference.



**BIGGIE & TUPAC**

RAZOR & TIE DIRECT

★

This report on the quagmire surrounding Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur's murders mostly examines the studied haplessness of its director, Nick Broomfield, whose irritating interview technique hinders any insights from Biggie's mother, Violetta Wallace, or from a detective who argues that the LAPD is thwarting the investigation.



**ALANIS MORISSETTE: FEAST ON SCRAPS**

MAVERICK

★★★

A scrapbook of Morissette's 2002 world tour finds the Canadian singer performing her verbose hits "Ironic" and "Hands Clean" at full shriek. But offstage, she really becomes a drama queen, spouting high-school psychobabble ("I need to speak my truth") before the cameras.



**KISS: UNAUTHORIZED, VOL. 2**

2RS STUDIOS/MVD

★★★

This two-hour video fanzine uses no copyrighted material (that is, Kiss songs), thus avoiding any action by the litigious Gene Simmons. But *Unauthorized* includes the kind of juicy material Simmons loathes, such as a chat with onetime Kiss guitarist Vinnie Vincent, who once claimed the band owed him millions in unpaid royalties.



**PUNK-O-RAMA: THE VIDEOS, VOL. 1**

EPITAPH DVD

★★★

Most of these 22 suburban-punk '90s videos, such as Rancid's Clash pantomime "Salvation," scratch an itch for defanged nostalgia. But two amusing clips subvert the expected: Refused cavort in bunny suits on "New Noise," and Millencolin sport action-figure armor on "Kemp."

**Blender Approved**

The best DVDs of the last three months



**24 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE**

MGM/UA HOME VIDEO

A hugely entertaining look at the dawn of New Order and the Happy Mondays, and how dumb luck and stupid moves made Tony Wilson a musical hero.



**THE MILES DAVIS STORY**

COLUMBIA MUSIC VIDEO

An unflinching look back at Davis's cocaine-speed life and his painterly way with jazz that's still unrivaled, a full 12 years after his death.

Universal/Courtesy of Everett Collection (Red Dragon), Merrick Morton/DreamWorks (The Ring), Jon Sward/United Artists (24 Hour Party People)



Badly Drawn Boy in badly drawn bath

## CLEAN FUN!

Britpop novelist Nick Hornby gives props to his favorite songs — and tosses in a CD too! By Andy Pemberton

### SONGBOOK

By Nick Hornby

MC SWEENEY'S, \$26

★★★★

▶▶ ON ITS FACE, Nick Hornby's *Songbook* should be a nauseating work of staggering self-indulgence.

The man behind *High Fidelity* and *About a Boy*, a rare book-and-film bifecta, has teamed up with hipster author Dave Eggers's artsy, smarty-pants publishing company. Their beautiful hard-bound book — 150 thick, tactile pages long — details Hornby's favorite tunes and what they mean to him. With an accompanying CD of exclusively white rock artists, it's a neat package aimed at coffee tables, not libraries.

Sounds pretty self-satisfied, doesn't it? Hornby himself points out another pitfall: namely, that "one has so many more opinions about what has gone wrong than about what is perfect." (Which is presumably why so many people still go to Jimmy Buffett shows.)

But *Songbook* works. Partly because, as *High Fidelity* proved,

Hornby is a music fan, and partly because he avoids too much tedious autobiography while dissecting the Avalanches' "Frontier Psychiatrist," Van Morrison's "Caravan," Led Zeppelin's "Heartbreaker" and 28 other songs in illuminating and amusing essays. Of course, Hornby being Hornby, he can't help but touch on love, maturity, fatherhood and even his own funeral along the way.

But *Songbook* is most affecting when he exposes his deepest emotions. While listening to one of Badly Drawn Boy's songs for *About a Boy*,

he's amazed by how it encapsulates his feelings for his recently diagnosed autistic son. "I write a book that isn't about my

kid, and then someone writes a beautiful song based on my book that turns out to mean something much more personal to me than my book ever did," he marvels. "It's worth an awful lot."

Or, as the playwright-composer Noël Coward once remarked, "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is." This light, funny book is not without a few hidden depths too.



### ALAN LOMAX SELECTED WRITINGS, 1934-1997

Edited by Ronald D. Cohen

★★★★ ROUTLEDGE, \$30

One day in the 1930s, musicologist Alan Lomax, who archived thousands of folk musicians between the 1930s and his 2002 death, invited Southern railroad worker Henry Trevellian to

sing into his tape recorder. "I don't sing, Mr. Lomax," Trevellian replied — apparently believing that chanting while laying railroad ties had no value. Lomax disagreed. From the Appalachians to the British Isles to Spain to the West Indies, in fields and prisons and clock factories, Lomax recorded the original indie artists: amateurs with no labels, albums or even instruments. This fascinating collection of highly respectful essays (and an accompanying CD) proves Lomax actually learned from his subjects, rather than using them to validate preexisting academic theory.

DAVID GREENBERGER

### THE BEATLES: THE DREAM IS OVER OFF THE RECORD 2

By Keith Badman

★★★★ OMNIBUS PRESS, \$20



Keith Badman's exhaustive compendium *Off the Record* followed the Beatles' solo careers after their 1970 breakup, and this new edition's hundreds of interviews and

news items include Sir Paul's marriage to Heather Mills and the deaths of Linda McCartney and George Harrison. We learn that French botanists named a rose Paul McCartney, and that George Harrison's dog Winston used to piss on him in their garden. But it's revealing to see Harrison as part mystic, part moaner, grouching that the Beatles' songs were "not all that good!" Badman's research carves a chirpy John, a defensive Paul and a confused Ringo into his Mount Rushmore of a Beatle book.

DAVID QUANTICK

### NUFONIA MUST FALL

By Kid Koala

★★★★ ECW PRESS, \$25

You'd think the life of a jet-setting DJ who spins at fashionista-filled nightclubs and tours with Radiohead is all



glamour, but Montreal virtuoso Kid Koala is an unabashed comic-book geek. On disc and onstage, Koala (a.k.a. Eric San) blends jazz and funk obscurities with snippets from Peanuts cartoons and *Revenge of the Nerds*; on paper, his nearly text-free *Nufonia Must Fall* finds a pudgy, pop-obsessed robot hero falling for a cute office girl. Despite expected romantic roadblocks, Koala's unpredictable story line evokes the DJ's gift for language-free emotion — but his stiffly rendered, scratchy, black-and-white drawings make his storytelling more stilted than the music on *Nufonia*'s bonus CD.

JONAH WEINER

### THE RAMONES

Photographs by Chip Dayton

★★★★ VISION ON PUBLISHING, \$15



Though the Ramones' unchanging visual identity over three decades mirrored their autistic emphasis on primal rock & roll, it doesn't yield a fascinating collection of images.

New York-based photographer Chip Dayton began snapping the band in 1975, but his endless realms of live photos — inevitably, all splayed legs, shades and torn denim — say precious little about Joey, Dee Dee and the brudders. The number of backstage and off-duty shots is minuscule, and the absence of any real context is worsened by a lack of substantive text. And neither an intro by 1990s New York punk Jesse Malin nor a brief Q&A with Dayton himself is especially illuminating.

JOHN HARRIS

### RYAN ADAMS

By Michael Heatley

★★★ OMNIBUS, \$20



Ryan Adams probably hasn't done enough to warrant a biography, and if he had, Michael Heatley probably wouldn't be the man to write it. Still, Heatley's cut-and-paste job is a reasonably unshabby overview of the country-rock wunderkind's career. Even the skimpy childhood material (by page 10, the singer-songwriter is already 18) reveals nice vignettes, such as



Ryan Adams: "They're out of syrup again?"

the time Adams had his grandma listen to Black Flag. (Noted Gran: "They love to hit those cymbals, don't they?") And any fans worried that Adams's passion for getting shitfaced is a recent affectation will be reassured to know entire tours with his first band, Whiskeytown, go unrecalled today: "That's how high I stayed!"

CLARK COLLIS

**SOUND OF THE BEAST**  
THE COMPLETE HEADBANGING HISTORY OF HEAVY METAL

By Ian Christie

★ ★ HARPERENTERTAINMENT, \$26

Ian Christie's book, capitalizing on the omnipresent Osbournes, should be subtitled *A Selective History of the Author's Favorite Bands*. That might explain why he dispatches metal forefathers Black Sabbath and Judas Priest briefly before slavishly analyzing the brutally purist 1980s metal explosion of Metallica and Slayer — and dismissing bands like Rage Against



**BACK TO THE BEACH**

A BRIAN WILSON & THE BEACH BOYS READER  
Edited by Kingsley Abbott

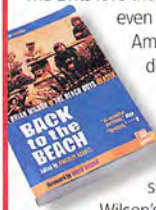
★ ★ ★ HELTER SKELTER PUBLISHING, \$19

The Brits love the Beach Boys even more than Americans do, and this London publisher's survey, expanded since Brian Wilson's recent *Pet Sounds* revival tour, demonstrates Wilson's enduring fascination. *Back to the Beach* compiles vintage essays and journalism about Wilson and his brothers' ascendance to American rock royalty, and their many family- and acid-addled psychic meltdowns. David Felton's poignant 1976 interview finds the allegedly drug-free Brian begging him for cocaine: "Do you have any at home? Do you know where you can get some?" Accounts of Wilson's distinctive madness get repetitive, but *Beach* helpfully documents *Pet Sounds* and the mysterious *Smile* from every conceivable angle.

MITCH MYERS

the Machine and Limp Bizkit, whose subgenres deviate from that standard. Christie is clearly well-versed in the codes of metal, reporting on Norwegian rockers who take classic metal's Satanic themes seriously enough to torch churches. Unfortunately, his utterly inflexible enthusiasm for thrash compromises his own mission to provide metal's complete history.

ROB KEMP



In his darkest days, Brian Wilson had to teach the advanced-beginner swim class.

**THE BEST PART OF A BIG BOOK!**

Santa Monica, 1980. British rock writer Nick Kent lands a rare interview at home with Brian Wilson — but things go from bad to worse to, well, completely bananas

WILSON, WHO must weigh at least 280 pounds, is eating a vegetarian salad, a fork in one hand and a cigarette in the other. He awkwardly begins trying to play the genial host. He apologizes for the starkness of the house. . . . Obviously ill at ease, his discomfort is instantly contagious. . . . Suddenly he leaps off the couch on which he's been slumped. He is a very, very big man.

"Hey! I'll show ya something really great about this place. Wanna see it?" He immediately motions toward the large bay windows. "This is really neat," he says, sounding like an excitable little kid about to show his parents a brand new party trick. Then he simply opens the windows and

gestures out at the night. "See? Air! Fresh air! Ummm! Healthy!! Let's keep 'em open, yeah?" He breathes in and out, vigorously. "Ummmmm . . . Neat! Outasight! . . . Healthy! . . ."

The photographer's camera is causing Wilson to flinch automatically as if torturous electric shocks were being triggered through his central nervous system. . . . I name a song from the new album that I particularly like and he literally screams.

"I hate that song! I hate that song!" Wilson is now chain smoking, flicking the ash into his half-eaten salad. Occasionally he digs a fork into the mess of chopped vegetables and cigarette ash and puts it in his mouth.

**"Air! Fresh air! Ummm! Healthy!! Ummmmm! Neat! Outasight!"**



From *Back to the Beach: A Brian Wilson & the Beach Boys Reader*, edited by Kingsley Abbott. Copyright © 2003 by Nick Kent. Reprinted by arrangement with Helter Skelter Publishing, London.

**Blender Approved**

The best books of the last three months



**HARDCORE TROUBADOR**

By Lauren St. John

FOURTH ESTATE IN AMERICA

Steve Earle's harrowing life has swung from accolades to crack — and back.



**ELVIS PRESLEY**

By Bobbie Ann Mason

VIKING PRESS

A short, deeply felt biography by a Southern novelist, spanning Elvis's dazzling youth to his worn-out end.



Can't we all just be friends? No!

**DEF JAM VENDETTA**

EA — PS2, GAMECUBE

★★★★

**SLAPPER'S DELIGHT**

Rappers beat one another up as you "up-grade" your girlfriend. Terrific! By Alex Porter

➤➤ TWENTY YEARS ago, Michael Jackson ruled MTV, and rival gangs settled scores in parking garages with high-kicking, moonwalking dance marathons. (At least that's how it went in the "Beat It" video.) Then gangstas started using Glocks — a more direct approach, sure, but one that often shortened rappers' life expectancy.

But now there's an arena where brutal thuggery and cheesy choreography can meet! Def Jam Vendetta lets game playaz pack PS2s instead of AK-47s. Step into the virtual Nikes of Ludacris, DMX, Method Man, Ghostface Killah and other Def Jam artists, and make them knock the snot out of one another to a soundtrack of their raps and taunts of the "I'm-a kick ya ass, bitch!" variety.

Vendetta players choose from a rogues' gallery — Scarface, Capone and N.O.R.E. are also on the roster — before

stepping into an underground *Fight Club*-style ring to punch, choke and groin-kick all rivals. Each character has his own signature and finishing moves, like the nefarious Redman, who distracts his opponents with a squad of rump-shakin' cheerleaders.

But the biggest villain here is fictional: D-Mob, the pimped-out promoter who's part Suge Knight, part Don King. Why do you want a piece of him? He controls the fight scene, and he stole your girl. Luckily, as you seek to rescue your paramour, you periodically upgrade girlfriends, who catfight one another for your attention. (We swear we are not making this up.)

Vendetta's smooth play and audacious style are amusing, though it leaves unresolved some of rap's biggest feuds. But until Jay-Z and Nas get a rock-'em-sock-'em game of their own, making Method Man kick DMX in the jewels will have to keep you busy.

**K'POW!**

It's hip-hop's most violent videos!

**N.W.A., "APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION"** (1991)

Dr. Dre and Eazy-E salute Al Capone by unloading Tommy guns into bank tellers. *Blender* calls it: "... a tribute to America's glorious past!"

**NAS, "HATE ME NOW"** (1999)

Oh, Christ! Nas gets crucified, and his label head later says Puff Daddy, who's in the video, had second thoughts and beat him up. "... a new high in blasphemy!"

**EMINEM, "GUILTY CONSCIENCE"** (1999)

Slim Shady encourages a frat-party rape, a would-be armed robber and a double murderer. "... a stylistic tour de force!"



Eminem: "Hi, Ma, I'm home!"



**THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER**

NINTENDO — GAMECUBE

The Zelda franchise still burns brightly 15 years and nine installments after its debut. This time, little elf Link travels the high seas for some sword-and-shield fighting — as well as wind controlling, song composing and cyclone summoning. All in the name of saving the world. ★★★★★



**ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004**

ACCLAIM — PS2, GAMECUBE, XBOX, PC

More baseball action and bean counting than you can waggle a big foam number 1 finger at. This is the hardcore hardball fan's field of dreams. Manage rosters! Build franchises! And mess around with history: Pit the unsung players of the Negro Leagues against fat white guys like Babe Ruth and bigots like Ty Cobb! ★★★★★



**UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING**

ATARI — PC

The series known for gory online first-person multiplayer death matches returns to a more story-driven, single-player format. You're a grumpy space sheriff who visits vast planets, roots out evil aliens and makes the universe safe for guys with big laser pistols. Equal fun for the brain and the itchy trigger finger. ★★★★★



**ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER**

KONAMI — PS2

You're a Japanimation character living in a futuristic space colony tortured by evil rebels — and you fight them in giant robot suits appointed with jutting breasts and big titanium schlongs. (Ah, anime!) The gravity-free judo fighting and rocket firing is a fast (though repetitive) delight. ★★★★★

**Blender Approved**  
The best games of the last three months



**AMPLITUDE**

SONY — PS2

Remix dance-floor hits by Bowie, Weezer, Garbage and other artists in a bizarre cyberspace landscape. *Wikki-wikki-wicked!*



**PANZER DRAGOON ORTA**

SEGA — XBOX

Shoot enemy vessels while flying around on a big-ass dragon as you're bombarded with all the pyrotechnics of a Kiss concert.

New Game Boy Advance SP with luminous screen

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Brilliant.

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Send your completed puzzle to Blender Puzzle Contest, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018.

## PENCIL ME IN!

Hey, it's *Blender's* crossword! Starring 16 Across!

BY BRENDAN QUIGLEY

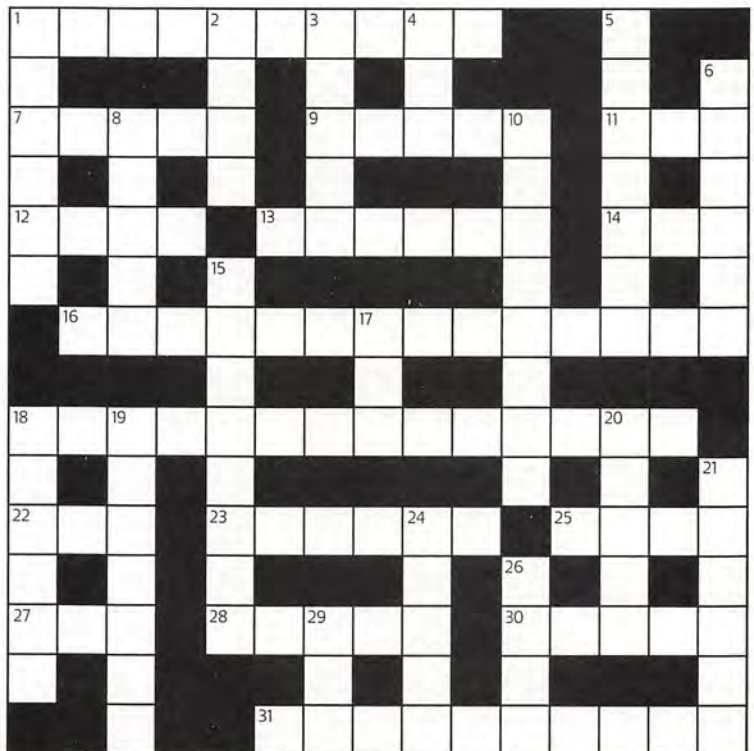


### ACROSS

- 1 D'ya think he's sexy? (two words)
- 7 Mötley Crüe bassist Sixx
- 9 NYC punk band with album *They Threw Us All in a Trench and Stuck a Monument on Top*
- 11 French electronica duo who scored *The Virgin Suicides*
- 12 Pimp-rapper-actor born Tracy Morrow (two words)
- 13 Madonna was crazy \_\_\_\_ (two words)
- 14 Maxell tape's competitor
- 16 Carlos Santana's partner on "The Game of Love" (two words) ...
- 18 ... and the group led by Santana's "Smooth" partner
- 22 Motor oil, or Scott Weiland's band (initials)
- 23 Punk-pop band with hit "Seether" — their first name ...
- 25 ... and their last
- 27 Dashboard Confessional's genre
- 28 GNR's top-hatted, mop-haired guitarist
- 30 Dave Stewart's partner-in-Eurythmics
- 31 Queens of the Stone Age's 2002 hit (three words)

### DOWN

- 1 California punks who lit a time bomb in 1994
- 2 The Strokes wonder: Is \_\_\_\_ it?
- 3 Band featured in the 2002 documentary *I Am Trying to Break Your Heart*
- 4 Producer and architect of the Wu-Tang Clan
- 5 Once-bankrupt Grammy winner Toni
- 6 R&B star Ms. Badu
- 8 Alternative rap's Talib
- 10 Neo-swing's \_\_\_\_ Nut Zippers
- 15 These dapper Swedish punks hate to say they told you so (two words)
- 17 Rough Rider's clique, featuring Jadakiss and Styles
- 18 Brooklyn rapper who collaborates with 8 Down (two words)
- 19 This nü-metal band has a "Poem" on the radio
- 20 Man, she feels like a woman!
- 21 R.E.M.'s hometown — in Georgia, not Greece
- 24 Morose Canadian crooner Leonard
- 26 Run-DMC and Aerosmith's 1986 team-up, "\_\_\_\_ This Way"
- 29 The Beatles: "It was 20 years \_\_\_\_ today ..."



## POP HISTORY! May 1953: James Brown Conquers Mt. Everest! Written by Clark Collis Illustrated by Daniel Hansen

For soul hero James Brown and his trusty sidekick, Sir Edmund Hillary, the world's highest mountain is the *ultimate* challenge.

The expedition proves more difficult than either imagined, a situation little helped by Brown's dictatorial leadership.

Finally, the ecstatic pair reach the top, just beating another expedition led by Brown's great climbing archrival Bootsy Collins.



COLUMBIA DENVER HOUSTON INDIANAPOLIS LAS VEGAS LONG ISLAND LOUISVILLE

LOS ANGELES MANCHESTER MEMPHIS MINNEAPOLIS MONTREAL NASHVILLE NORFOLK PHILADELPHIA PHOENIX

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RALEIGH ROCHESTER SAN FRANCISCO SEATTLE TACOMA WORCESTER YOUNGSTOWN

Twenty-three-year-old cuddle-thug rap star Fabolous prefers to live — and die — large: He likes his tour bus liberally stocked with “ho’s,” and wants his final resting place decked out in “24-carat gold with canary diamonds.” Which, somewhat inevitably, brings up the question . . .

BY ROB TANNENBAUM  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN STEPHENS

## WHO DOES **FABOLOUS** THINK HE IS?

**Why did you draw a monster for your self-portrait?**

That’s my alter ego. I like to be a monster sometimes, especially when people try to take advantage of me or disrespect me. I’m like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: a monster trapped inside a human body.

**And you drew little green dollar signs for eyeballs. Why?**

I like money. I love the culture of hip-hop, but I also love the benefits. I love making the money. I’m a paper chaser.

**And speaking of the benefits: Ho’s — yes or no?**

Yes. Nobody wants to live with a ho or marry a ho [laughs]. But sometimes, ho’s have their purpose, let’s just put it that way. Like when I’m on tour.

**When was the last time the monster came out?**

I was getting some very annoying phone calls, and that’s one thing that gets on my nerves. I had to unleash the monster and scream at a couple of girls. Girls call you all day — they might call you 20 times in one day. You know how girls are.

**Oh, sure, we have the exact same problem. Who was the last person you felt like killing?**

The *Blender* photographer. No, I’m playing [laughs].

**Where do you want to be buried?**

I would like to be buried in a platinum mausoleum with diamonds on it. Have a 24-carat gold casket with canary diamonds — they’re yellow. And lots of girls bringing in lots of flowers.

**On a scale of 1 to 10, rate yourself for generosity and looks.**

Generosity, I’m a 7. I’m from New York, so New Yorkers are a little skeptical. For looks, I’m an 8 1/2, an all right-looking guy. There could be some improvement if I worked out, beefed up a little bit. I’m a slim guy. If I was just a little more beefy, a little more cut, that would make me a 9 1/2.

**What kind of music do you hate?**

Country. We don’t hear a lot of country music in the ‘hood. But for some reason, I like Shania Twain.

**Wonder why. What do people who don’t like you say about you?**

That I’m a pretty boy, that I’m conceited, that I’m a punk. None of those things are true.

**Well, you *are* pretty, Fab.**

I like to be clean and look good, so if that makes me a pretty boy, I don’t see anything wrong with that.

**Can we ask the monster a question?**

Sure, ask him.

**What do you think of Fab?**

Fab is a punk. I’m tougher.

**What do you think of Fab’s music?**

It’s a little for the ladies sometimes.

**What does the monster think of this interview?**

The monster would have fucking walked out of this room a long time ago. [BLENDER]



➤ “I’m a monster trapped inside a human body.”

◀◀ REMEMBER: THEY DON'T RESPECT US — SO LET'S SURPRISE THEM/WE'LL DROP THE BIG ONE AND PULVERIZE THEM



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